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AN

ESSAY

ON THE

EQUITY OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT,

AND THE

SOVEREIGNTY OF DIVINE GRACE.

WHEREIN, PARTICULARLY, THE

LATITUDINARIAN HYPOTHESIS OF INDETERMINATE REDEMPTION, AND THE ANTINOMIAN NOTION OF THE DIVINE DECREES BEING THE RULE OF MINISTERIAL CONDUCT, ARE CAREFULLY EXAMINED.

BY EDWARD WILLIAMS, D. D.

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?—Gen. xviii. 25.

And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.—Dan. iv. 35.

Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?—Rom. ix. 19, 20.

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever.—Deut. xxix. 29.

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PREFACE.

THE author of this Essay, when studying a particular subject, above twenty years ago, was naturally led to contemplate, through the medium of the sacred writings, GOD'S COVENANT of redemption and grace, and its various dispensations. In the course of his inquiries, he perceived an evident difference between what may be denominated the *internal form* and the *external administration* of that covenant, as clearly implied in the whole tenor of divine revelation. He found in the same records, that the INTERNAL FORM is nothing else than a *decretive design* of benefiting the favoured objects of the covenant, together with the *actual execution* of that design, by an infinitely wise order and process, known to GOD alone; but that the EXTERNAL ADMINISTRATION is only an *exhibition* of the good we need, whether by proclamation, by testimony, or by positive institutions, under a *conditional* form, addressed to the will of a free agent.

This induced him, unavoidably, to view man as at once a PASSIVE RECIPIENT of decreed benefits, and a FREE AGENT; an agent possessed of *exemption* from restraint or interference in the *morality*, or *manner* of his accountable actions. The more he thought of this distinction, as fairly implied in the scriptural account of GOD'S covenant and its dispensations, the more clearly he perceived its great importance in reference to the *blessings* we actually receive, and the *account* we must

finally give of our conduct. The holy scriptures, throughout, represent man, in the *first* instance, as a *passive recipient* of benefits; as to his very being, his righteousness, his holiness; his renovation, preservation, and spiritual ability for acceptable obedience: but in the *second* instance, they abound in representations of man as possessed of will, and exemption from constraint in the morality of his actions; as the subject of moral government, before whom are laid good and evil, promises and threats, the approbation and disapprobation of the legislator, governor, and judge, for time and for eternity.

Comparing these important representations of man, according to scripture, with the just principles of science, he found that the latter might be successfully employed in the service of the sacred records. And particularly, as the doctrines of LIBERTY and NECESSITY stand so intimately connected with the preceding views, he was led, from the importance of the subject, to a close re-examination of those doctrines. In this pursuit, he saw reason to conclude, that the internal form of the covenant was in fact a glorious branch of decretive *necessity*; and that its external administration was an important part of the doctrine of *liberty*. Since, however, liberty and necessity, as commonly understood, had been considered *incompatible* with each other, this occasioned a new object of enquiry; whether, the scripture doctrine of man being at once, but in different respects, physically *necessitated* and yet *free*, be not philosophically accurate? The result has been, to the author's full conviction, in the affirmative.

But,

But, reflecting that the uniform tenor of scripture (with which a few expressions of a different aspect are easily reconciled) regards man, whenever sovereignly necessitated, as the recipient of some *benefit*, he saw just cause for inferring, that such *necessity* is connected with *good*, in a manner *exclusive* of evil. And this appears perfectly consistent with reason. As GOD is not a being containing in himself the source of Good, and the source of Evil *alike*, resembling an union of the OROMASDES and ARIMANIUS of the Persians, he can be the author or cause of *good only*. But if so, his *necessitating decree* can have only *good* for its object. Nor is it sufficient to say that good and evil are only *relative considerations*; that what is good in *one* respect, may be evil in *another*. For this remark applies only to *physical* good and evil, and therefore both are worthy of divine necessitation. The mechanism of the universe, and the laws of matter and motion, are good, though individuals are sufferers by their influence. The same may be said of the world of minds. The constitution of intelligent natures, and the general laws to the influence of which they are necessitated, are all good, and worthy of infinite benevolence.

Now a great difficulty presented itself. Since *good alone* appears worthy of GOD'S necessitation; while common sense, reason, conscience, and every part of the sacred scriptures testify that there are *evils* which GOD blames, hates, and condemns; how can the FUTURITION of those evils be pronounced *certain*, while a necessitating *decree* of them is rejected? The author plainly saw, that the advocates of philosophical necessity are not a little embarrassed on this head; and many of them, in order to preserve self-consistency, are

obliged to do it at the expense of a moral system, and even the *possibility* of moral evil. According to them, every thing is of *decretive*, and consequently of *physical* necessity; and to *call* it philosophical, hypothetical, or metaphysical necessity, does not alter the case, while the *idea intended* is not different. Though man is the subject of innumerable associations, all the creatures of circumstances; yet, to be consistent, while maintaining that the *evil manner* of a physical act is included in the divine causation, they must hold that man *is as much* impelled to the murderous villany of his free act, as a dog is impelled, by his instinctive propensity and the will of his master, to worry a sheep, or to kill a hare. He was also aware, that authors of great and deserved celebrity, in the orthodox persuasion, went little farther than to ascribe to GOD the causation of good only, with a *bare denial* of his being the author of sin. When pressed with the enquiry, How can the *certain futurition* of sin, and the *divine causation*, be separated in a fair and satisfactory manner? they have said little more than, "Beware of going too far—we shall know it well in a future state." But if it be a good thing to be well informed concerning it in *another* world, I can see no sufficient reason why further information in the *present*, should not likewise be considered as *good* and *useful*.

This investigation, *the true* CAUSE *of the certain futurition of moral evil*, the author could not regard as a speculative nicety, but as a subject of MOST RADICAL IMPORTANCE, intimately connected with almost EVERY BRANCH OF ETHICS AND THEOLOGY. Here also he had recourse to the dictates of the sacred oracles; which, though they do not *expressly* state the case, as in a thousand other points of confessed importance, clearly afford

afford sufficient DATA from whence the fair conclusion may be drawn. They every where maintain that GOD is the *cause* of our *good;* and that WE OURSELVES are the *cause* of our *moral evil.* The scattered rays of this great truth are brought, by the apostle James, into a focus: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD; for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from *the Father of* lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The holy scriptures also fully state an ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE between the Creator and the creature; ascribing to the one, self-existence, independence, and all-sufficiency, but to the other a derived existence, absolutely dependent on the first cause, and therefore without any sufficiency but what is derived by participation. And the nature of the case is so plain, that these predicaments are not less applicable to *all* creatures, than to *some;* to creatures we do *not* know, as well as to those whom we *do* know. It matters not in what period of time or of eternity, or in what spot of the universe they exist; nor does any conceivable excellence of their nature or endowments alter the case. Grant that they are *contingent* and not absolute beings; *created,* or caused to exist by an uncaused agent; and it is enough. They are then stamped with essential comparative defect and limitation. By magnifying and exalting their nature, we only magnify and exalt

the CAUSE in whom they "live, move, and have their being." For, abstracted from that cause, their nature, their existence, the mode of their existence, and their operations, are as NOTHING.

After viewing this awful truth in relation to every individual creature, and to the whole universe of created existence, through the medium of scripture and of reason; and after dwelling upon it habitually as an essential principle closely connected with *personal religion*; the author could not resist the evidence which presented itself, respecting the *true cause* of the futurition of moral evil, as being clearly and necessarily implied in the preceding considerations. For evidence of the *manner* how this conclusion follows from the principles ascertained, the reader is referred to the work itself. But from what has been said it may be perceived, that the conclusions respecting the Origin of Sin were not so much *purposely sought*, as naturally and unavoidably perceived to *flow* from indubitable principles of truth.

The argument by which his conclusion is supported, the author cannot regard as a mere HYPOTHESIS concerning Moral Evil, but as an IRRESISTIBLE INFERENCE drawn from the primary truths of scripture and of moral science. And, indeed, as in every demonstration, the conclusion is the thing proved; in proportion as the *data* are true, and the *inference* is legitimate, it may be called a DEMONSTRATION. An "Hypothesis" is an assumed *supposition*, as the basis of a theory; but here *no data* are assumed which are not either granted by all as first principles, or the denial of which is not reducible to a contradiction. In moral science there is no AXIOM so perfectly self-evident but *cavils* may be raised against it. If the following be not admitted as an axiom in the science

science of morals—*There is a God*—it is difficult to say what can be; and yet who knows not that this proposition has been controverted? If, therefore, some men controvert what others regard as a self-evident axiom, their denial is not sufficient to discredit the honourable title of a Demonstration, provided that denial be reducible to an absurdity, or a fair self-contradiction.

There is one thing of great importance on this head, which the author believes is very generally overlooked, and to which the attention of the reader is earnestly invited, *viz.* That to ascertain the ORIGIN of moral evil is a very different affair from ascertaining the MODE of its origination. Where this confusion of ideas so different *in their* nature exists, there is little prospect of accommodation. To the general philosopher, and particularly to the physiologist and chemist, it will easily occur, that the *modus* of a process in producing an effect may remain a profound mystery, while the origin or *cause* of such effect may be satisfactorily demonstrated. This remark is equally applicable to the origin and the process of good and evil; and the precise point of dispute is, What is the ULTIMATE SOURCE of the one and of the other?

Inseparably connected with the preceding steps of inquiry, were found the views of the DIVINE CHARACTER which *correspond* with the twofold relation of man, who is at once both necessitated and free. The questions which principally needed to be ascertained were, What is the *true cause* of *necessitation* to good? and, What is the *true cause* of *freedom*, or *exemption* from a decretive necessitation to moral evil? As nothing exists without an adequate cause, both the one and the other of these predicaments of a moral agent must necessarily

have such cause. And by observing the same process of investigation; first by an examination of scriptural positive evidence, and then by comparing that with true principles of reason; it was found, that no other adequate cause could be assigned of necessitation to good, but SOVEREIGN BENEVOLENCE; nor any other adequate cause of exemption from decretive necessitation, but DIVINE EQUITY.

The more strictly and impartially this inquiry was made, the more forcible was the evidence, that to these two causes were all the parts of ethics and theology ultimately reducible. Hence the determination of attempting a scriptural and rational display of the *Equity of divine Government* and the *Sovereignty of divine Grace*, and an examination of different systems by the light of these principles. At first, indeed, the design was to publish a small Essay, containing merely the author's leading ideas; but as he proceeded in penning his thoughts, the subject appeared to acquire accumulated interest and importance. Accordingly, he announced his design of publishing an octavo volume; and, amidst many interruptions from personal and domestic illness, changes of situation, and multiplied engagements, he penned the greatest part of the work at intervals; and a considerable portion of it was printed many years ago. He had from the first, and ever since increasingly, a strong and habitual conviction that the *primary* and *essential* parts of the projected work are the truths of GOD, deduced from, and harmonizing with the holy scriptures; and not only that they are *truths*, but also principles of the utmost importance towards a satisfactory view of religion in all its bearings, as to doctrine, experience, and practice.

This

This made him proportionably anxious to ascertain, whether they would bear, with equal satisfaction to his mind, the test of continued *experience*, in their personal and practical influence; of *argument*, by means of reflection, conversation, reading and correspondence; and of *prejudice*, by an occasional diffusion of them. On trial, he found—at least he thought—this last to be the only formidable opponent; while the experiment has given him the most satisfactory proof of a warm approbation from persons whose judgment, piety, and usefulness are highly respected in the religious world. He does not, therefore, all things considered, regret the *delay* of publishing the work, notwithstanding the frequent and pressing solicitations of his friends; for, though efforts have been made to represent his views of Equity and Sovereignty, and some primary truths inseparably connected with them, as an unprofitable speculation, (than which nothing can be more unfounded) it has been the means of preparing the public mind to give the subject more close attention, which it is presumed will be growingly advantageous to the important truths here defended.

After a watchful attention to the interests of *consistent* orthodoxy, for above twenty years past; after constant prayer to GOD, the only wise, for direction; after trying the effect of his principles on the congregations where providence has called him to labour in the ministry; after feeling, when apparently at the very entrance into the eternal world, that a just view and experience of the *Equity* of divine government, and the *Sovereignty* of divine grace, filled him with godly consolation; after observing with increased conviction, that learning and ingenuity, in some late attempts,* have utterly

* See the APPENDIX at the End of the Volume.

utterly failed in their opposition to the leading ideas contained in this work; and finally, after learning that the publication of it is now more than ever expected; —the author ventures it abroad with fervent supplications for a blessing to rest on every reader, and with firm and unshaken confidence, that the sentiments it contains are "the truth as it is in Jesus," and highly important to be well understood by professing christians.

The ADDITIONAL NOTES are inserted from a conviction, that though philological and critical disquisitions respecting the use of terms are seldom interesting in the body of a work, yet much controversial difference in the investigation of real opinions arises from a neglect of accurate statements. The principal terms indeed are defined in the first chapter, but it has been found by experience that some other terms needed explanation, the use of which in a metaphysical sense could not be avoided, without still greater inconvenience in inventing new ones. In no case is this more clear than in the words TENDENCY, EVIL, POWER, CAUSE and EFFECT. The generality of readers hastily conclude that all such terms must convey *positive* ideas whenever used; without reflecting, that there is most assuredly a *negative* idea, to be expressed by each of these terms, which cannot well be conveyed without them. Such persons, being familiarly and exclusively acquainted with either the physical or moral application of them, are soon confounded by their metaphysical use. And yet, since metaphysical ideas *are not less real and precise* in their nature than the others, there seems no alternative but the use of such terms in a *new sense*, properly explained, or the fabrication of *new*

terms

terms, which would also need appropriate definitions. To make light of this process, is to impede scientific knowledge, and virtually to say, that rhetoric alone is the field for improvement.

The author has, at various times, submitted to the public some of his leading sentiments on the subjects discussed in this volume; and these have called forth the opposition of different writers, for whose extraordinary opinions, and still more extraordinary misrepresentations, it is difficult to account. But where are the *arguments*, founded either on scripture or common sense, adduced by the opposers of his principles? Is it fair, is it candid to *assume* a sense of terms which the author utterly disavows, and which had been previously disavowed by repeated and various explanations? To triumph in supposed absurd and shocking consequences *so* deduced, argues a disingenuous and cowardly mode of attack, and a disposition not very friendly to the attainment of sacred truth. Had any persons professing themselves the followers of PELAGIUS or ARMINIUS produced such works as have recently appeared, in order to counteract the doctrine of *sovereign grace* and to obtrude the *self-sufficiency* of the creature to secure his own goodness, their denomination would have served as an antidote to those who profess opposite sentiments. But works which have no settled explanation of terms, which do not even pretend to any fixed sentiments on the subject they discuss, seem but little calculated to cope with the subtle adversaries of evangelical religion. Such works may obtain approbation for a time, from unwary readers; but truth is no temporizer.

Of

Of one thing the author is fully satisfied; that no *consistent* scriptural Calvinist can oppose the leading principles of this Essay. Concede to a philosophical *Necessitarian* that GOD is the author of good and evil *alike*, and to a *Pelagian* that MAN is the author *alike* of his good and evil; and their systems respectively may assume a tolerable appearance of consistency. But a *Calvinist*, siding to either of these hateful extremes, departs at once both from self-consistency and from truth.

Having long seen the importance of subverting error by a developement of sacred truth, as revealed in the scriptures, in its most *radical* principles, the writer's mind has been habitually impressed with the mode adopted in this Essay; while convinced that the mechanical, *necessitarian* scheme, on the one hand, and the *self-determining* hypothesis, on the other, can never be fairly overturned on the principles of science, but in harmony with what is here defended. But whether an opponent sally forth from the camp of PELAGIUS, of ARMINIUS, or of PRIESTLEY; or whether he call himself a high or a low, a rigid or a moderate *Calvinist*, a supralapsarian or a sublapsarian; the author is not moved about it. It is enough if they be confronted with the unforced language and uniform tenor of scripture, the experience of the humble and benevolent christian in his most heavenly tempers, the dictates of common sense, the first principles of moral science, and the legitimate use of right reason. "Truth and *such* company may give a modest man confidence."

There are thousands who defend the doctrines of grace in a constant appeal to "chapter and verse;" and

and they do well. But why should not a person sometimes with the *pen*—though seldom from the pulpit, before a mixed audience—meet the adversaries of truth, by shewing, that every scheme and every tenet which opposes the truths we hold, is *unreasonable* as well as unscriptural; by shewing, that when they reason correctly, their principles are false, or when their principles are common, their ratiocination is inconclusive. To make "metaphysics" a watch-word in order to avoid *every thing* defended by the science, as if *faith in the pure gospel* were in danger, argues a weakness truly contemptible. If reputed metaphysicians reproach Calvinism, or evangelical principles under whatever name, as an *irrational system*, is a person who rejoices in the truth as it is in Jesus, though clothed in its plainest form, to be blamed and condemned when he undertakes to prove that it is perfectly consistent with the first principles of reason, and that the various schemes of its opposers will not stand the test of such investigations? Should we not, on proper occasions, shew the *reason* of our faith and hope, to the full extent of attainable evidence? If the whole system of revealed truth, or any particular part, which demands our *faith* on the mere testimony and authority of GOD, can be shewn, in the face of subtle objectors, and by instruments to which they constantly and boastfully appeal, to stand clearly and immovably on the basis of eternal truth, does an effort to that effect deserve opposition?

Let not the reader be imposed upon by ungenerous innuendos, as if this volume were sufficiently exposed by calling it "a new theological scheme:" but let him reflect, whether it be not more properly denominated "a *new argument* against error;" or "a new argument for

for the truth," particularly for genuine CALVINISM—for the *good old way*, so frequently and fiercely spoken against—and for the *doctrine according to godliness*, opposed alike by the profane profligate, the proud pharisee, and the equally proud philosophical sceptic. Satan is a busy foe, and never has there been a probability of great good to be effected by any scripture doctrine, or any mode of exposing error, but he has employed all his arts to suppress it.* But what a pity that *good men* should have either lot or portion in such a work!—Indeed we ought not *first* to reason and *then* believe. No; let us *first* believe whatever GOD asserts, and *because* he asserts it: then we may shew, that we are not chargeable with being *irrational* by those who question our interpretation of scripture. Our opponents contend that what we pronounce to be the genuine sense of revealed declarations is a mistake, *because* not compatible with rational principles; let us then take them on their own ground, and shew, from those very principles, that their objections are futile.

From the time that Dr. BEATTIE attacked Mr. HUME and other sceptical writers, in his "Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth," it has been the fashion to decry metaphysics as useless and dangerous; and to consider common sense (as if the former were inconsistent with the latter) as the *ultimatum* of evidence. The method he adopted was followed by two effects; one was, to bring into discredit the writings he attacked, and a happy effect it was; but the other was of a very different complexion. By calling HUME a metaphysician, the association was easy to bring into disrepute a sublime and most useful science. But Dr. BEATTIE would have done much greater service to the cause

cause of truth had he represented Mr. HUME as, what indeed he was, a subtle, sophistical wrangler. To reason with acuteness on principles fundamentally false, is the true province of a *sophist*, but not at all of a metaphysician.

Perhaps there never was a man less intitled to the honourable appellation of a metaphysician than Mr. HUME. And perhaps, too, there is not a term in the whole nomenclature of science so little connected, in its too common application, with a clear and distinct idea, and consequently so much abused. If indeed the science consist in "verbal disputation without precise ideas;" if the aim of proficients in it be "to divest the mind of every principle, and of all conviction; and consequently, to disqualify man for action, and to render him as useless and wretched as possible;" if it intend "that mode of abstract investigation which is supported by ambiguous and indefinite phraseology, and partial experience; and which seldom fails to lead to such conclusions as contradict matter of fact, or truths of indubitable authority;" let it be for ever banished into those regions of darkness whose prince is the father of falsehood: or if it be permitted to occupy any spot of this earth, let it be some *solitary Crete*, whose inhabitants are "always liars."

But, on the contrary, if while standing in the TEMPLE OF TRUTH, we are assisted by any science, (the title is of no moment,) to discover the grandeur of its design, its wonderful proportions, and its exquisite ornaments; and if while viewing the TEMPLE OF ERROR, we are enabled, by the same aid, to perceive the insecurity of its foundation, its tottering pillars, and

and its disgusting want of symmetry, notwithstanding its gaudy and petty embellishments;—to speak contemptuously of such assistance is a mark of ignorance and folly, and to cultivate acquaintance with it is worthy of the purest wisdom.

EQUITY AND SOVEREIGNTY.

INTRODUCTION.

Containing ſome preparatory Obſervations.

§ 1. *Man is a ſubject of moral obligation.* § 2. *And therefore free in his actions.* § 3. *Yet his actions are predetermined.* § 4. *Hence the difficulty of reconciling the divine decrees with human liberty.* *Abp.* LEIGHTON. § 5. SAURIN. § 6. *The general plan of this work.* § 7. *Preparatory meditation.*

§ 1. THERE have exiſted but few characters, comparatively, among men, ſo obdurate and abandoned as to deny, that mankind are ſubjects of *moral obligation*; and, indeed, it is very difficult to *reflect ſeriouſly* for a moment, without admitting the ſolemn fact. If *man* be not ſuch a ſubject—an *accountable creature*, originally and conſtantly deſigned to render voluntary homage to the will of God—we have no evidence that there is, or may be, *any* being whatever in the univerſe, who *can* be morally obliged. But

to maintain ſuch a conſequence, is to move, with unhallowed ſteps, to the gloomy regions of Atheiſm. For, it ſeems impoſſible that any creature ſhould either *prove*, or *believe*, on juſt grounds, the exiſtence of a firſt Cauſe, without admitting, on the ſame grounds, his own obligations to obey him.*

§ 2. But if man be the ſubject of moral obligation, it is requiſite he ſhould be *free* from conſtraint in his moral actions. We may juſtly ſay, that man becomes morally *obliged* to any act, on condition that he is formed and permitted to *act freely*, according to his choice and pleaſure. The limits of his *freedom* (call it power, ability, liberty, or what you pleaſe) to act as he chooſes, are the limits of his obligations to act; and *vice verſâ*. To ſay that a man is *not at liberty* to act according to his volitions, is the ſame as to ſay he is *not obliged* ſo to act. If a man is *not at liberty*, or has not power, to make himſelf an angel, to fly as a bird, or to perform any other impoſſibilities, it is ſelf-evident that he is not obliged to perform them.

We ſhould remark, however, that when any volition has for its object, in any given circumſtance, what is contrary to *rectitude*, whether that object be attainable or unattainable, phyſically conſidered; freedom is abuſed, and a breach of moral obligation follows. For though we are not *obliged* to perform

* The ſeparate and concurrent verdict of *conſcience*, of *reaſon*, and of *revelation*, in evidence of this point, being ſo univerſally acknowledged to be deciſive, renders a more particular diſcuſſion of it here unneceſſary.

form impoſſibilities or improprieties, however theſe may be the objects of our choice; and though we have no *freedom* to act, phyſically, according to ſome of our volitions; yet the *choice itſelf* is the act of a moral agent, and, if contrary to rectitude, wrong.

Of the exiſtence of this liberty every thinking perſon has the evidence of conſciouſneſs, and reiterated experience. From theſe reſpectable ſources, notwithſtanding the efforts of ſcepticiſm to prove that liberty is an illuſion, he is ſatisfied and aſſured that he is *free*, unconſtrainedly free, in all his moral actions. He finds that his accountableneſs to the ſupreme Governor is not only the inſeparable adjunct, but alſo the neceſſary *effect* of liberty properly ſo called. I ſay, liberty *properly* ſo called; for it muſt be carefully diſtinguiſhed from ſpontaneity, or the liberty of brutes, and therefore may be denominated *human liberty*.

§ 3. Nevertheleſs, in proportion as we aſcribe to the Almighty Sovereign the character of *wiſdom*, we muſt exclude *chance* out of the world. The one is pure light, the other total darkneſs. Seeing, therefore, he is infinitely wiſe, every *entity*, whether being or action, muſt be the effect of *deſign*.—Beſides, whatever takes place in time muſt be *foreſeen*; and whatever has an efficient cauſe muſt be the effect of *omnipotence*; hence, the *predetermination* of all entity in human actions.

We obſerve in the world around us, independent of the evidence formed by teſtimony, numerous inſtances of *evil*, natural and moral; and many glorious diſplays are made of wiſdom and benevo-

lence, power and grace, which could have no being without the prior exiſtence of *moral evil.* This is abundantly clear from that illuſtrious effect of divine benevolence, the goſpel diſpenſation.—But is evil a *neceſſary* inſtrument to produce good? What, then, becomes of the divine holineſs, that ſhould employ ſuch means; of the divine wiſdom and power, that ſhould require them; and of divine goodneſs and equity in ſubjecting the creature to their influence?—Hence,

§ 4. To reconcile the exiſtence of moral evil with the acknowledged perfections of Deity; the irreverſible divine decrees with human liberty; or, which amounts to the ſame thing, to account for (*πoθεν το κακον*) *the origin of evil,* has been in every age, more or leſs, the "great croſs of theologues."—ORIGEN aſſures us, that "if there be any thing in "human affairs, propoſed to examination, which "our nature finds difficult to inveſtigate and com-"prehend, it is the *origin of evil.*"* And this, in effect, has been the language of moſt perſons, that ever thought upon the ſubject. As forming a ſuitable part of introduction to my deſign, I ſhall preſent the reader with ſome extracts, which exhibit in a ſtriking manner the *difficulties* of the ſubject, and with what *diſpoſition* it ſhould be ſtudied.

Of all the paſſages I ever met with, in human writings, calculated at once to check preſumption, and to direct the mind to the moſt profitable improvement of the humbling difficulty, the following, addreſſed by Archbiſhop LEIGHTON to the

* ORIG. contra CELSUM. Lib. iv.

the ſtudents in divinity, in the publick hall of the Univerſity of Edinburgh, has made the deepeſt impreſſion on my mind: "One thing we may con- "fidently aſſert, that all thoſe things, which the "great Creator produces in different periods of "time, were perfectly known to him from eternity; "and every thing that happens, throughout the "ſeveral ages of the world, proceeds in the ſame "order, and the ſame preciſe manner, as the eter- "nal mind at firſt intended it ſhould.—All that "acknowledge God to be the author of this won- "derful fabrick, and all the things in it, which "ſucceed one another in their turns, cannot poſſi- "bly doubt, that he has brought, and continues "to bring them all about, according to that moſt "perfect pattern ſubſiſting in his eternal councils; "and thoſe things which we call caſual, are all "unalterably fixed and determined to him. For, "according to that of the philoſopher, *Where there* "*is moſt wiſdom, there is leaſt chance*; † and there- "fore, ſurely, where there is infinite wiſdom, there "is nothing left to chance at all.

"Theſe things we are warranted and ſafe to "believe; but what perverſeneſs, or rather mad- "neſs, is it to endeavour to break into the ſacred "repoſitories of heaven, and pretend to accom- "modate thoſe ſecrets of the divine kingdom to "the meaſures and methods of our weak capaci- "ties! To ſay the truth, I acknowledge that I "am aſtoniſhed, and greatly at a loſs, when I hear "learned men, and profeſſors of theology, talk-

† Ubi plus eſt ſapientiæ, ibi minus eſt caſus.

" ing preſumptuouſly about the *order* of the divine " decrees, and when I read ſuch things in their " works. *Paul conſidering this awful ſubject as an* " *immenſe ſea, was aſtoniſhed at it, and viewing the* " *vaſt abyſs, ſtarted back, and cryed out with a loud* " *voice, O! the depth,* &c. Nor is there much " more ſobriety or moderation in the *many notions* " that are entertained, and the diſputes that are " commonly raiſed about reconciling theſe divine " decrees, with the liberty and free will of man.

" They always ſeemed to me to act a very " ridiculous part, who contend, that the effect of " the divine decree is *abſolutely irreconcileable* with " human liberty; becauſe the natural and neceſſary " liberty of a rational creature is to *act* or chooſe " *from a rational motive*, or ſpontaneouſly and of " purpoſe; but who ſees not, that, on the ſup- " poſition of the moſt abſolute decree, *this liberty* is " not taken away, but rather eſtabliſhed and con- " firmed? For the decree is, that ſuch an one " ſhall make choice of, or do ſome particular " thing *freely*. And, whoever pretends to deny, " that whatever is done or choſen, whether good " or indifferent, is ſo done or choſen, or, at leaſt " may be ſo, eſpouſes an abſurdity. But, in a " word, the great difficulty in all this diſpute is, " that with regard to the *origin of evil.* Some " diſtinguiſh, and juſtly, the ſubſtance of the " action, as you call it, or that which is phyſical " in the action, from the morality of it. This is " of ſome weight; but whether it takes away the " whole difficulty, I will not pretend to ſay.

" Believe

" Believe me, young gentlemen, it is an abyſs, it " is an abyſs never to be *perfectly fathomed* by any " plummet of human underſtanding.

" Should any one ſay, *I am not to be blamed, but* " *Jove and fate*, he will not get off ſo, but may be " nonpluſed by turning his own wit againſt him. " The ſervant of ZENO, the ſtoic philoſopher, " being caught in an act of theft, either with a " deſign to ridicule his maſter's doctrine, or to " avail himſelf of it, ſaid; *It was my fate to be a* " *thief. And to be puniſhed for it*, ſaid ZENO. " Wherefore, if you will take my advice, with- " draw your minds from a *curious ſearch* into this " myſtery, and turn them directly to the ſtudy of " piety, and a due reverence to the awful majeſty " of GOD. Think and ſpeak of GOD and his " ſecrets with fear and trembling, but diſpute " very little about them; and, if you would not " undo yourſelves, *beware of diſputing with him*; " if you tranſgreſs in any thing, blame yourſelves; " if you do any good, or repent of evil, offer " thankſgiving to GOD. This is what I earneſtly " recommend to you; in this I acquieſce myſelf; " and to this, when much toſſed and diſtreſſed with " doubt and difficulties, I had recourſe as to a ſafe " harbour. If any of you think proper, he may " apply to men of greater learning; but let him " take care, he meet not with ſuch as have more " forwardneſs and preſumption."*

After an attentive peruſal, and repeated conſideration of this addreſs, I was at a loſs, for a

* LEIGHTON's Theological Lectures. Lect. X.

while, whether or not I ſhould proceed in my inquiries concerning divine *equity* and *ſovereignty*, and the ſubjects therewith connected. Proceeding from a mind ſo enlarged by reading and reflection, and ſo remarkably devout, his advice to his pupils "*to diſpute very little*" about theſe myſteries, and to "turn their minds directly to the ſtudy of piety," amounted with me to almoſt a prohibition from making any farther advances. The reſult however was, not to *quit* my purpoſe, but to endeavour to make the beſt uſe of the advice in the *proſecution* of it; and particularly to avoid all *raſh curioſity* in my reſearches into ſubjects confeſſedly awful, and above all to *beware* of diſputing *againſt God*.

§ 5. Among many other paſſages which have occurred in the courſe of my reading, of ſimilar tendency, there is one more, extracted from a very celebrated author, with which I ſhall beg leave to trouble the reader. The author I refer to, is the learned, the penetrating, and ſublime SAURIN. "The queſtions, ſays he, concerning "the decrees of GOD are ſo abſtruſe, that in all "ages of the church, and particularly ſince the "ſchiſm of PELAGIUS, divines orthodox and heterodox have employed all their efforts to give "us a ſyſtem free from difficulties, and they have "*all failed in their deſigns.*" — After pointing out various difficulties attending the ſeveral ſyſtems in vogue, prefaced with this remark, "that the ſubject is *beyond the reach of the human mind*;" after diſcarding the ſyſtem of SOCINUS and his followers, which

which tends not to *elucidate* (by denying the divine preſcience) but to *ſubvert* religion; which tends to degrade GOD from his Deity, and the ſcripture from its infallibility; * after diſcarding the ſyſtem of ARMINIUS, which grants foreknowledge, but denies fore-appointment; after ſhowing, that it is inconſiſtent with itſelf, that it does not ſquare with ſcripture, that it tends not to leſſen the difficulties, in

* *The ſyſtem of* SOCINUS *and his followers:*] "But the men we oppoſe do not much reſpect the deciſions of ſcripture. The principle to which all this ſyſtem tends, is, that *reaſon* is to decide on the doctrines of ſcripture, and not that the doctrines of ſcripture are to direct reaſon. This principle once granted, all the doctrines of our faith are ſubverted, as *experience* proves. See into what raſh declarations this principle hath conducted SOCINUS and his followers. What deciſion of ſcripture, what doctrine of faith, what truth however eſtabliſhed, repeated and enforced, hath it not allured them to deny? The bondage of the human will ſeems to deſtroy the nature of man: this bondage muſt be denied. But the doctrine of abſolute decrees ſeems to diſagree with the liberty of man: theſe abſolute decrees muſt be denied. But the foreknowledge of GOD cannot be allowed without the doctrine of decrees: the foreknowledge of GOD muſt be denied. But a thouſand prophecies prove this preſcience: the myſtical ſenſe of theſe prophecies muſt be denied. But Jeſus Chriſt hath verified them: then Jeſus Chriſt muſt be denied, his titles, his attributes, his works, his worſhip, his ſatisfaction, his divinity, his union to GOD, his incarnation, muſt all be denied: he muſt be made a mere man, a prophet, a teacher diſtinguiſhed from others only by ſome extraordinary talents: the whole ſyſtem of the goſpel, of ſalvation, and of redemption muſt be denied. To follow theſe ideas, my brethren, is to tumble from precipice to precipice, without knowing where we ſhall ſtop." SAURIN's Sermons, Vol. V. Serm. xi. Engl. p. 299.

It muſt be allowed, however, that ſome of the modern SOCINIANS, or, as they affect to be called, *Unitarians*, eſpouſe the ſentiment of philoſophical neceſſity, which implies the divine preſcience in the fulleſt ſenſe.

in caſting any light on the ways of providence, in filling up any of the depths which abſorb our imperfect reaſon, and, in a word, is ſubject to the very ſame difficulties as that of predeſtination; † after

† *The ſyſtem of* ARMINIUS, *which denies fore-appointment:*] "Although it is never our cuſtom to envenom controverſy, and to tax people with hereſy for not being of our opinion; tho' we would rather reconcile oppoſite opinions than triumph in refuting them; yet we cannot help making three reflections.

1. "We affirm that this ſyſtem is inconſiſtent with itſelf, that the doctrine of preſcience ſuppoſes that of predeſtination, and unleſs we deny that GOD foreſaw our ſalvation, we are obliged by our own theſis to affirm that he predeſtinated us to it. I grant there is a ſenſe, in which it is true that to foreſee a thing is different from determining to bring it to paſs: but there is another ſenſe, in which to foreſee and to fore-appoint is one and the ſame thing. — Let us ſuppoſe that before the creation of this world GOD had ſubſiſted alone, with one other ſpirit ſuch as you pleaſe to imagine. Suppoſe, when GOD had formed the plan of the world, he had communicated it to this ſpirit that ſubſiſted with him. Suppoſe, that GOD who formed the plan, and the intelligence to whom he had communicated it, had both foreſeen that ſome men of this world would be ſaved, and others loſt; do you not perceive, that there would have been an eſſential difference between the preſcience of GOD, and the preſcience of the ſpirit we have imagined? The foreknowledge of this laſt would not have had any influence either over the ſalvation, or deſtruction of mankind; becauſe this ſpirit would have foreknown, and that would have been all: but is not the foreknowledge of GOD of another kind? Is that a ſpeculative, idle, and uninfluential knowledge? He not only foreſaw that man being free would make a good or ill uſe of his liberty, but he gave him that liberty. To foreſee and to fore-appoint in GOD is only one and the ſame thing.

2. "The ſyſtem of bare preſcience doth not ſquare with ſcripture, which clearly eſtabliſhes the doctrine of predeſtination. — I am aware of what is objected. It is ſaid, that we make phantoms to combat, that the meaning of St. Paul (Rom. ix.—xi.) is clear, that

after diſcarding the ſyſtem of the *Supralapſarians*, which, according to him, ſtates, that GOD reſolved to puniſh ſuch and ſuch perſons, not becauſe he foreſaw they would ſin, but he reſolved they ſhould ſin that he

that the end he had in view puts the matter out of doubt, and that his end hath no relation to abſolute decrees, much leſs did he deſign to eſtabliſh them. The apoſtle had laid down this poſition, that the goſpel would hereafter be the only œconomy of ſalvation, and conſequently that an adherence to the Levitical inſtitution would be fatal. The Jews object to this, for they could not comprehend how an adherence to a divine inſtitution could lead to perdition. St. Paul anſwers theſe complaints, by telling them that GOD had a right to annex his grace to what conditions he thought proper, and that the Jews, having rejected the Meſſiah, who brought ſalvation to them, had no reaſon to complain, becauſe GOD had deprived them of a covenant, the conditions of which they had not performed. According to theſe divines this is all the myſtery of theſe chapters. — But how can this be ſuppoſed to contain the whole deſign of the apoſtle? — Hear his anſwers. *Before the children were born, before they had done either good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, he ſaith, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger. Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. The ſcripture ſaith to Pharaoh, For this purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might make my power known. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Who art thou who replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel to honour, and another to diſhonour? What if God willing to ſhow his wrath, and to make his power known, endures with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath prepared to deſtruction.* In all theſe anſwers St. Paul hath recourſe to the decrees of GOD.—Thus the ſyſtem of preſcience without predeſtination doth not agree with ſcripture.

3. "We aſk — What is this ſyſtem good for? Does it caſt any light on the ways of providence? Does it fill up any of the depths, which

he might damn them; after diſcarding all theſe ſyſtems, and explaining, in a few words, that of the reformed churches,* he adds: "Hereupon if you "aſk how it happens that of two men to whom "Chriſt

which abſorb our imperfect reaſon? In a word, is it not ſubject to the very ſame difficulties as that of predeſtination? Thoſe difficulties are the following: How could a GOD ſupremely good *create* men, who he knew muſt be ſome day infinitely miſerable? How could a GOD infinitely *holy* permit ſin to enter the world? How is it that a GOD of infinite love to *juſtice*, doth not beſtow on *all* mankind ſuccour ſufficient to render them perfectly holy? How came it to paſs, that a GOD, who declares he *would have all men to be ſaved*, did not reveal his will for the ſpace of four thouſand years to any but the ſingle nation of the Jews? How is it, that at this preſent time, he doth not extend our conqueſts to the ends of the earth, that we might carry thither the light of chriſtianity, preach the goſpel in idolatrous climes, and the moſques of Mohammed? How doth he afford life, and health, and ſtrength, and courage, and opportunity to a creature, while he proſecutes black and horrible crimes, which make nature tremble? Theſe are great difficulties in providence. Let any one inform us of a ſyſtem without them, and we are ready to embrace it: but in the ſyſtem now before us all theſe difficulties are contained, and ſhould we grant its advocates all they require, they would be obliged however to exclaim with us on the borders of the ways of GOD, *O the depth!*" *Ibid.* 300—305.

* Mr. SAURIN's *abridgment of the reformed doctrine:*] "We believe that GOD from a principle of goodneſs created mankind— that it was agreeable to his wiſdom to form man free —that the root of mankind, Adam, our unhappy father, abuſed his liberty —that his deſcendants have added to their natural depravity, and to the ſins of their anceſtors, many crimes of their own — that a conduct ſo monſtrous rendered parents and children worthy of eternal miſery, ſo that without violating the laws of juſtice GOD might for ever puniſh both — that having foreſeen from all eternity theſe misfortunes, he reſolved from all eternity

" Chriſt is preached, the one receives and the " other rejects him? we anſwer with St. Paul, this " difference is, *that the purpoſe of God according to* " *election might ſtand.* If you aſk again, Whence " comes this choice, how is it that GOD chooſes to " give his Spirit, and to diſplay his mercy to one, " and that he chooſes to make the other a victim of " his juſtice? We anſwer, *God hath mercy on whom* " *he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth,* " that is, leaveth him to his own inſenſibility. If " you inquire further, how GOD can, without injur- " ing his holineſs, leave a man to his own hardneſs? " We reply, that GOD is maſter of his creature, " and that *the potter hath power over the clay, of the* " *ſame lump to make one veſſel unto honour, and another* " *unto diſhonour.* If you ſtill demand, What " then is the uſe of our miniſtry, and what right " hath GOD to complain that ſo many ſinners per- " ſiſt in impenitence, ſince he hath reſolved to " leave them in it? To this we anſwer, *Who art* " *thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed* " *ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me* " *thus?*"

" After all theſe queſtions, ſhould you appeal to " our conſciences to know whether our own anſwers " fully ſatisfy ourſelves; whether our arguments " may

eternity to take from this unworthy maſs of condemned creatures a certain number of men to be ſaved — that for them he ſent his Son into the world—that he grants them his Spirit to apply the benefits of the death of his Son — and that this Spirit conducts them by the hearing of the word to ſanctification, and from ſanctification to eternal felicity. This, in a few words, is the ſyſtem of our churches." *Ibid.* 308.

" may not be turned againſt us; whether the ob-
" jections we have made againſt others do not ſeem
" to conclude againſt ourſelves; and whether the
" ſyſtem we have propoſed to you appear to our-
" ſelves free from difficulty; to this we reply by
" putting our finger upon our mouth: *we acknow-*
" *ledge our ignorance:* we cannot rend the vail under
" which GOD hath concealed his myſteries: we
" declare, that our end in chooſing this ſubject
" was leſs to remove difficulties than to preſs them
" home, and by theſe means to make you feel the
" toleration which chriſtians mutually owe to one
" another on this article. It was with this view
" that we led you to the brink of this abyſs of GOD,
" and endeavoured to engage you to exclaim here,
" as well as on the borders of other abyſſes, *O the*
" *depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and know-*
" *ledge of God! How unſearchable are his judgments,*
" *and his ways paſt finding out!*

" The decree is impenetrable. The book of
" life is ſealed.—A little leſs ſpeculation and more
" practice. Let us become leſs curious, and try
" to be more holy. Let us leave GOD to arrange
" his own decrees, and for our parts let us arrange
" our actions, and regulate our lives. Do not ſay,
" If I be predeſtinated to ſalvation, I ſhall be ſaved
" without endeavouring. You would be wicked
" to make this objection; for although you are
" perſuaded that your *days are numbered*, yet you
" do not *omit to eat and drink*, and take care of
" your health. In this manner you ſhould act in
" regard to your ſalvation.

" And

" And we, miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, what is " our duty? Why are we ſent to this people? Is " it to fathom the decrees of predeſtination and re- " probation?—Muſt this be the principal ſubject " of our ſermons? God forbid we ſhould ſo ill " underſtand the end of our miniſtry!—Let us " think of the account we muſt give to the maſter " who ſent us. Let us take care that he doth not " ſay to us in the great day of judgment, Get ye " behind me, ye refractory ſervants! I ſent you to " make the church holy, and not render it diſputa- " tious; to confirm my elect, and not to engage " them in attempts to penetrate the myſteries of " election; to announce my laws, and not to fathom " my decrees.

" This ſubject addreſſeth itſelf to you, raſh " divine, you who perplex your mind by trying to " comprehend incomprehenſible truths, to you " whoſe audacious diſpoſition obliges you to run " into one of theſe two extremes, either to embrace " error, or to render truth doubtful by the manner " of explaining it. For underſtand, my brethren, " the man who rejects a truth becauſe he cannot " comprehend it, and he who would fully compre- " hend before he receives it, both ſin from the " ſame principle, neither underſtands the limits of " the human mind. Theſe two extremes are alike " dangerous. Certainly, on the one hand, we " muſt be very raſh, we muſt entertain very " diminutive ideas of an infinite God, we muſt be " very little verſed in ſcience, to admit only prin- " ciples which have no difficulty, and to regard

" the

" the depth of a ſubject as a character of falſehood. " What! a miſerable creature, an ignorant crea- " ture, a creature that doth not know itſelf, would " know the decrees of GOD, and reject them if " they be unfathomable! But, on the other hand, " we muſt have very narrow views, we muſt have " a very weak mind, we muſt know very little of " the deſigns of GOD, not to feel any difficulty, to " find every thing clear, not to ſuſpend our judg- " ment upon any thing, to pretend not only to " perceive the *truth* of a myſtery but to go to the " *bottom* of it. Inſignificant man! Feel thy di- " minutiveneſs. Cover thyſelf with duſt, and learn " of the greateſt of divines to ſtop where you " ought to ſtop, and to cry on the brink of the " ocean, *O the depth!*" ‡

I was induced to tranſcribe theſe excellent paſſages as peculiarly well calculated to anſwer two valuable purpoſes; to ſerve, firſt, as a proper *check* upon myſelf and others; and, ſecondly, as a ſeaſonable *admonition* to the reader, that if he do not find all his doubts and ſcruples removed in the following pages, reſpecting ſome of theſe *adorable depths*, he may be prepared to make due allowances. And happy will it be for author and reader when a ſenſe of ignorance, and of the limits of human under- ſtanding, leads to devout adoration. This is true wiſdom. From the very ruins of our nature, we are enabled, by adopting ſuch a method, to form an aſcending ſtep in the divine life.

§ 6. In

‡ *Ibid.* 308—313.

§ 6. In the pages of this Volume it is my deſign, —after (chap. i.) explaining the principal *terms* relating to our ſubject, with ſuitable remarks,—to give (chap. ii.) a view of the *equitable moral government* of GOD, with reſpect to mankind;—and then (chap. iii.) a view of *ſovereign grace*;—after which the way will be prepared to examine (chap. iv.) the fundamental principles of the *Arminian ſyſtem*, and particularly thoſe of Dr. WHITBY on the Five Points, and Mr. FLETCHER'S controverſial writings. In the CONCLUSION will be ſhewn, at ſome length, how theſe leading principles are calculated to expoſe a number of *other erroneous opinions*, and their conſequent *advantage in* reference to morals and religion. This is the general plan: but before I launch my ſmall bark into this great ſea of difficulties, where dangerous rocks lie, on which greater and ſtronger veſſels than mine have been ſplit;—let me make a ſolemn pauſe, and for a few moments indulge that diſpoſition to which all theological and moral inveſtigations ought to be ſubſervient.

§ 7. Contemplating the bleſſed GOD, I behold an ocean unfathomable and without ſhore! But what am I?—Let me aſk myſelf a few queſtions. *Canſt thou*, worm of the earth, *by ſearching find out God? canſt thou*, fluttering moth, *find out the Almighty unto perfection?* a perfection *high as heaven: what canſt thou do? deeper than hell: what canſt thou know?** *There is no ſearching of his underſtanding.*†

* Job xi. 7, 8. † Iſaiah xl. 28.

It is no wonder that my conceptions of an infinite Spirit, and his tranſcendent perfections, ſhould be inadequate; for it is but a ſmall part of his *ways* I can underſtand. And if his ways are paſt finding out, if his expreſſed judgments are unſearchable, what muſt be his ſecret counſels? *Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counſellor? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To whom be glory for ever!**

Yet, that my ſoul be *without knowledge* is not good. This is life eternal, experimentally *to know thee* the only true GOD, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent. Thy children have an *unction* from the Holy One *to know* the indications of *thy will.* Thoſe who *fear thee* are favoured with a *ſecret* unknown to others, and thou wilt *ſhow them thy covenant.*† What was my intellect given me for, but eminently for the purpoſe of contemplating, with reverence and attention, thy glorious nature and perfections, the ſublime movements of thy providence, and the ſublimer operations and effects of thy grace? How ſhall I intelligently adore and love that GOD, of whoſe equity as a Governor, and of whoſe rights as a Sovereign, I have no ſettled conceptions?

This, O my Creator, I underſtand, that thou art ALL, and I am NOTHING. On this condition I exiſt, that I conſider myſelf as nothing and vanity. The moment I begin to think myſelf ſomething *without* thee, I ſtand condemned. O *nothing*, be ſtill for a few moments of that vain life which thou ſpendeſt

* Rom. xi 34, 36. † Pſalm xxv. 14.

ſpendeſt as a ſhadow; loſe thyſelf in ſolemn ſilence; be wholly abſorbed in the greatneſs of GOD. O! the real happineſs of *ſelf-annihilation*. And as nothing can be more happy, ſo nothing can be more equitable; more conformable to eternal rectitude.

Divine grace alone can ſubdue the ſwellings and proud boaſtings of the heart. When the creature claims any power, be it of the will or any other faculty, to do the leaſt *good*, without the aid of him who ſaid, *Without me ye can do nothing*, it ſets up an idol, and offers incenſe to it. This idol is *ſelf*. O vanity, O *nothing*, how blind art thou to thy nature! Thou canſt no more *act well* without God, than thou couldſt form a body or create a ſoul.

But though we have no power to do right, we have power of our own to do *wrong*, if he keep us in exiſtence; a man has power to rob GOD of his due, to commit idolatry, to withdraw delight and affection from him. And is this a power to boaſt of? What good am I poſſeſſed of, what good have I done, which thou didſt not furniſh me with, or prompt me to? None at all. Think properly, and thou wilt find—*not the leaſt imaginable*. O my Creator, Saviour, and Sanctifier, keep me from the evil to which every created nature is unavoidably prone, but from which, by ſovereign interpoſitions, thou canſt effectually preſerve me.

I beſeech thee, ſovereign Lord, let no falſehood of any kind be permitted to drop from my pen to thy diſhonour; while I humbly join with thy ſervants Ezekiel and Paul to diſprove the impious

charge, and remove the foul calumny, which is virtually uttered by many of thy profeſſing people, who ſay; "If GOD hath decreed to beſtow more "grace upon one than upon another, *his ways are* "*not equal:* if I have no power to convert myſelf, "*why doth he yet find fault?*"—Let this effort, ſincerely intended, however weak, ſtand as a monument for GOD, againſt the idolatrous ſelfiſhneſs of every creature.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Containing an explanation of the principal TERMS relating to the ſubject under conſideration.

§ 1. *Introduction.* § 2. *the term* EQUITY *defined.* § 3, 4. *And further illuſtrated.* § 5. *The term* SOVEREIGNTY *defined.* § 6. *Explanatory remarks.* § 7. *Some inſtances of ſovereign acts.* § 8. *A* MORAL AGENT *defined.* § 9. *What things are eſſential to an accountable moral agent in a ſtate of original probation.* § 10. MORAL EVIL, *or ſin, defined and explained.* § 11. *That* LIBERTY *which is eſſential to moral agents.* § 12. *The different kinds of neceſſity to which a moral agent is ſubject.*

§ 1. HAVING occaſion, in this Eſſay, to treat of *Equity* and *Sovereignty*, and a variety of ſubjects connected with theſe leading thoughts, relating to *moral agency* and *moral evil*, *liberty* and *neceſſity*; it may be proper in the firſt place, to define and explain theſe *terms* with care; for it cannot be doubted, that much ambiguity and miſunderſtanding have been the effect of omiſſions of this kind, eſpecially when ſubjects ſo abſtruſe, and ſo much controverted, have been the matter of diſcuſſion.

§ 2. By the term "*equity*," I underſtand much the ſame thing as is commonly meant by the words

" diſtributive juſtice;" and which in its exerciſe, denotes, " a giving unto all their *due.*" That God poſſeſſes a principle of *equity* is almoſt ſelf-evident; for, if he be not equitable, he is not poſſeſſed of rectitude; and if not poſſeſſed of rectitude, he is not perfect; and if not perfect, he is not God, and *vice verſâ.* There is not, there cannot be, any injuſtice with God. *He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.** Is God *unrighteous* who taketh vengeance? how then ſhall he *judge* the world? The Judge of the whole earth ſhall do *right*, and nothing but what is right; that is, by giving to *all their due*, he will *wrong no man in his matter.* — Whether, therefore, the *object* of this equity be God himſelf, or the creature he hath made, he gives to all to the utmoſt extent of what they can, *in truth*, claim. And in proportion as We are *equitable*, we ſhall give to God the things that are God's, and to the creatures the things that are theirs.

§ 3. Further to illuſtrate the Definition, and to prevent miſtake, it is needful here to obſerve the following particulars:

1. A thing is properly *due* from one Being to another, when there is a *true ground* of claim. Thus in whatever point one has a true ground of claim on God, that perfection of his nature which we call *equity* engages to grant it; but when no ſuch ground exiſts, the engagement ceaſes.

2. God

* Deut. xxxii. 4.

2. God owes to *himſelf* every thing that does not imply imperfection or contradiction; or, which amounts to the ſame thing, he can do nothing inconſiſtent with his own infinite excellence and real dignity. Whatever is *of* him, is *due* to him. This is the rational cauſe of all thankſgiving and praiſe on earth and in heaven: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and were created;—Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.**

3. God owes to a *creature*, as ſuch, nothing; for the very *idea of* derivation and abſolute dependence, which are eſſential to a creature, excludes all claim on the Creator for *being* itſelf, and conſequently for any of its enjoyments. Who hath firſt given unto the Lord, that he may be recompenſed again? *If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head.*

4. God owes (and it is all he owes) to an *accountable creature*, as ſuch, that he ſhould be poſſeſſed of *intellect*, *will*, and *freedom*; and ſhould have for his choice *objects ſuitable* to his wants. I do not ſay, that the preſervation of his *being* is due to him; becauſe if *that* be not preſerved, accountableneſs expires with it. That a creature poſſeſſed of ſenſation, with a capacity and liableneſs to perpetual ſuffering, to a degree worſe than non-exiſtence, or in any degree as a penal evil, ſhould be *accountable*, and yet deſtitute of *intellect*, *will*, and *liberty*, appears inconſiſtent with all true grounds of juſtice. And,

* Rev. iv. 11. vii. 12.

though poſſeſſing theſe powers, if he has to chooſe *only* ſuch objects as are utterly unſuitable to his wants, (and having an active principle of volition he *muſt* chooſe ſomething) he is unavoidably neceſſitated, from his make and circumſtances, to be always miſerable; which is inconſiſtent with all proper views of equity.—And is it not ſelf-evident, that whatever the accountable creature enjoys more than this, is not a matter of right but of favour?

§ 4. When I ſay that equity requires the giving to every one his *due*, the meaning is not, that the rigid operation of mere equity can in no caſe be ſuſpended; but, that the creature has no ground of claim againſt that operation. Though the creature is *ſafe from ſuffering* any thing *but* what ſtrictly is *its due*; yet, it does not bind God againſt ſuch acts of favour, contrary to our deſerts, as may ſecure, and illuſtrate, in the manner of conferring them, the honour of his extenſive government. For inſtance, no offender can *claim*, on the ſcore of mere equity, the pardon of ſin; this, however, does not hinder, but that he may, in an honourable manner, forgive ſin. This muſt be granted, if there be *mercy* in God. Hence Juſtice thus viewed, taken not ſtrictly on both ſides the line of rectitude, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, but guarding only againſt the injuring of the creature, and reſerving a mode of doing it good contrary to its demerit, has been defined by ſome, "Goodneſs, diſtributed with wiſdom; or, goodneſs attempered with wiſdom." *

And

* Vid. STAPFERI Inſtitut. Theol. vol. I. cap. iii. § DLXVI.

And what is mercy but the over-ruling of ſtrict equity, for the good of the undeſerving creature, in a manner conſiſtent with its real honour.

This account of equity being *bound* only on *one ſide* of the line of rectitude, muſt be admitted; otherwiſe it would inevitably follow, that GOD had a right to give exiſtence to a moral ſyſtem, which from its very nature was *liable* to be deranged, which derangement it was not in his power to over-rule for the final happineſs of any one offender, which is abſurd. And yet, as the failure of the creature was *naturally* followed with a loſs of favour and painful remorſe; and equity required that the penal *ſanction* (which either explicitly or tacitly belongs to every law) ſhould follow the tranſgreſſion of the law; we muſt conclude, that the office of ſovereign mercy does not conſiſt in the diſannulling or annihilation of the claims of equity, but in finding and appointing an expedient, a reconciling medium, whereby its claims are granted and yet the offender is not bound over to ſuffer. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.** *Thanks be to God for his unſpeakable gift.*

§ 5. By the term "*ſovereignty*," I underſtand, "GOD's *abſolute right* to will and to do whatever is not inconſiſtent with his own eſſence, intellect, and fixed purpoſe." After the actual exiſtence of the mundane ſyſtem, a thing may be incompatible with the divine *purpoſe*, and therefore no proper object of ſovereignty, though originally not incompatible with

* Gal. iii. 13.

with the divine nature. I ſaid, not inconſiſtent with the divine "*eſſence*," as well as "*intellect*;" becauſe, *that* is the ultimate formal reaſon of all ſovereign acts. For though no acts of ſovereignty can be inconſiſtent with the divine *intellect*; yet, ſince *this* repreſents to itſelf all *poſſibles*, the higheſt ſource, the ultimate foundation of preference, muſt be the infinitely good, wiſe, powerful, and juſt *Eſſence*. —That the bleſſed JEHOVAH poſſeſſeth ſuch "*abſolute right*," needs no other proof than this — that *there lies no poſſible ground of remonſtrance againſt it*. In regard to a *moral* ſyſtem, as ſuch, whatever is not the effect of equity *muſt of courſe* be the effect of ſovereignty; for to theſe two principles *every thing*, as to the divine conduct towards ſuch a ſyſtem, is ultimately reducible.

§ 6. On this article it may be proper, before we proceed further, to make the following remarks:

1. Divine ſovereignty cannot poſſibly extend, as ſome have affirmed it may, to the hurting of the accountable creature beyond its demerit, for that would be an infringement upon equity, an attribute equally ſacred and inviolable. However different, therefore, may be the *aſpects* of any divine attributes, when viewed in different *relations*, they can never be inconſiſtent with each other, or admit of the leaſt unharmonious interference. Wherefore ſovereignty never hurts, never pains, never puniſhes at all; much leſs without or beyond prior demerit: — Hence it follows:

2. That

2. That ſovereignty in GOD never exerts itſelf but for the *good* of its object. If this "abſolute right" be exerted, in any degree, for the *harm* of the *accountable* creature, it would, in the ſame degree, ceaſe to be ſovereignty, and degenerate into *injuſtice*. Conſequently, as *equity* never diſapproves of the creature but for what is *wrong*; ſo, divine *ſovereignty* is in no caſe employed but for its *welfare*. —Hence alſo,

3. The *perfect harmony* of theſe divine attributes, properly underſtood, in the moſt intricate, and otherwiſe inexplicable, œconomies. For inſtance, ſovereignty, from its definition, is not *bound* to prevent *ſin*, or to find an expedient to pardon it, though it *may*. Alſo juſtice, *puniſhing* the offender, it is plain, does not *oppoſe ſovereignty*; nor does the *ceaſing* to puniſh *oppoſe juſtice*, when the grand ends of moral government are anſwered.

4. In proportion as any creature has no true claim upon GOD, in point of equity, all his *enjoyments* muſt be the effect of ſovereignty. And, particularly, (to inſtance only in a few things) to this adorable ſource we muſt refer the divine *plans*, — and *creation*, entirely; — and a mixture of it in *providence*, — and final *judgment*: — all *miracles*, — every principle, act, and degree of *holineſs*, — together with the *reſurrection* of the body. — On theſe particulars let us obſerve:

§ 7. 1. When JEHOVAH *decretively* adopted *one ſcheme* of things, out of *all poſſibles* which the divine intellect beheld in the all-ſufficient eſſence, it is ſelf-evident

evident that he exerted an act of high ſovereignty. He could be under no obligation, except to *himſelf*, the infinitely good and wiſe, to cauſe one poſſible plan to become the object of his purpoſe rather than another. Who hath known the mind of the Lord, in this matter, that he ſhould have a counſellor? He giveth not account of any of theſe matters; it is not right he ſhould; nor is it poſſible for a finite mind to comprehend the *ultimate reaſons* of the divine pleaſure and preference. He alone, who knows all poſſible entities, all poſſible worlds, with all their differences, relations, and final reſults, and all this at the ſame inſtant, can fathom the depth of ſovereign choice, in reſpect of the general plan itſelf, or the *minutiæ* of its contents as to coexiſtence and ſucceſſion.

2. Another act of ſovereignty was the *creation* of the univerſe; by which the divine purpoſe began to flow *ad extra*. To execute this high and ſtupendous act he could be under no obligation, except to *himſelf*, to fulfil his own wiſe decree. *For his* mere ſovereign *pleaſure all things* now *exiſt, and were* originally *created.** When, in the beginning, GOD formed the heavens and the earth, *he made all things for himſelf*,† — to anſwer the good and wiſe pleaſure of his own predetermined will. *We were the clay, and He our potter*; ‡ and *hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel* unto greater *honour, and another unto* leſs, or comparative *diſhonour?* ‖

3. In

* Rev. iv. 11. † Prov. xvi. 4. ‡ Iſa. lxiv. 8. ‖ Rom. ix. 21.

3. In the work and conduct of *providence* ſovereignty is often intermixed with equity. God is under no original obligation to any but *himſelf*, to preſerve or *perpetuate* the exiſtence of any creature. I ſay, *original* obligation; becauſe, if his infinite goodneſs and unerring wiſdom decreed, and his condeſcenſion *promiſed* a prolonged or perpetual *ſupport* of the creature; there is a ſenſe in which intelligent beings may be ſaid to have a ground of claim in equity for that ſupport; and yet, even in theſe caſes, the obligation, properly ſpeaking, is to *himſelf*, his wiſdom in declaring, and veracity in performing. He is God, he is infinite truth, and therefore it is his glory that *he cannot lie*; and it is equally ſo, that *he cannot deny himſelf*. Hence the heirs of promiſe are furniſhed with a ground of *ſtrong conſolation*.*

Moreover: God is under no obligation to any but *himſelf*, for appointing and maintaining ſuch a wonderful *difference* among his creatures. Why, for inſtance, is one created nature formed greater, ſtronger, handſomer, and more intelligent or wiſe than another? Why are ſome made to ſuffer *leſs* than others for the ſame offence, or even a greater, though none ſuffer beyond their deſert? Nay, ſome of the moſt daring offenders are *ſpared long*, while others, who are not only free from groſs diſhonouring crimes, but at the ſame time in a ſtate of divine acceptance, are viſited (ſtill equitably) with great calamities, or *premature* death. One nation is juſtly left covered with thick darkneſs; while others in ſovereign goodneſs are enlightened with revealed truth.

* Heb. vi. 16—18.

truth. Why was Abraham favoured in ſo tranſcendent a manner above all other men of his day? Why were Moſes and Aaron appointed to the high honours of legiſlation and the prieſthood? Why was one woman, rather than another, choſen to be the mother of the Meſſiah? Why was Paul made ſo diſtinguiſhed a veſſel to bear, and inſtrument to proclaim, the *unſearchable riches of Chriſt?* Theſe are but a few *ſpecimens* of a ſovereign providence, taken out of a ſtore equally awful and inexhauſtible. *Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can ſay, Thou haſt wrought iniquity?*

4. At the *final judgment*, which is the cloſing ſcene of providence, there will be, according to the ſcripture account, wonderful monuments of ſovereignty, intermixed with equity. Who of the ſaints will or can ſay, that the reward does not, in point of ſtrict equity, far exceed their ſervice and obedience? While none ſhall have room to ſay that they are dealt by unjuſtly, behold *ſome*, baniſhed from bliſs, with deep conſciouſneſs of guilt as a never dying worm, or unextinguiſhable flame; while *others*, waſhed from fouleſt ſtains, *juſtified and ſanctified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God*,* are invited, in ſtrains of ſovereign pleaſure, and admitted to enjoy the kingdom prepared for them *from the foundation of the world.*

5. All *miracles* muſt be referred to this ſublime attribute for their ſource. For though the *effects* of ſome miracles were *punitive*, and therefore were deſerved, and *juſtly felt* by thoſe on whom they were performed; as in the caſe of the Egyptians, Elimas the

* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

the Sorcerer, &c. yet every miracle, which implies a temporary ſuſpenſion or inverſion of the common laws and mechaniſm of nature, requires, without exception, the hand of *ſovereignty* for its production. To deny this is to deny the exiſtence of miracles.

6. Every principle, act, and degree of *holineſs* in a creature fallen from rectitude, muſt neceſſarily claim the ſame origin. The connection of moral and natural evil, as cauſe and effect, is as indiſſoluble in the moral world, according to the original conſtitution and courſe of things, as any cauſe and effect can be connected in the natural world; and the ſuſpenſion of the effect in the former caſe, *requires as real a miracle*, as any ſuſpenſion in the latter does. This the ſcriptures abundantly corroborate when they ſpeak of regenerating and converting grace.

7. To this high attribute we muſt refer the promiſed *reſurrection* of the body. This appeared to the heathen philoſophers, who diſputed with St. Paul at Athens, an *incredible* doctrine; nor is it any wonder, while they remained ignorant of the *miraculous* power of GOD. For what, ſhort of a ſovereign ſupernatural act, can effect ſo wonderful a change? and how was it poſſible to know a future miracle, with any degree of certainty, but by divine revelation?

§ 8. By a "*moral agent*," in the moſt general ſenſe, I underſtand "a being *capable* of enjoying the chief good," which is JEHOVAH all-ſufficient. This

definition

definition (which implies intellect, will, and freedom, § 2—4.) is applicable to GOD and all his rational creatures.

A "*perfect* moral agent" is a being in the *actual* enjoyment of the chief good, and who enjoys every inferior good in a regular ſubordination to that higher end. This applies not only to GOD, but alſo to holy angels and glorified ſaints; whereas the righteous while on earth, though actually enjoying the chief good, are not *perfect* moral agents, becauſe their enjoyment of every other good is not always, if ever, in the regular ſubordination above mentioned.

An "*accountable* moral agent," or, which is the ſame thing, the ſubject of moral government, is "a "being who poſſeſſes a *capacity* for enjoying the chief "good, who has *means* both ſuitable and ſufficient "to keep him from ſinning, and who has a *power* of "abuſing or not abuſing thoſe means." This definition is applicable to all accountable moral agents whatever, the fallen angels not excepted. That *theſe* have a natural *capacity* of enjoying the chief good, and have alſo a *power* of *abuſing* means, needs little explanation. But ſome may find it difficult to admit, that they have *means* to keep them from ſinning, and a *power* of not abuſing theſe means. If, however, they are *offenders* as well as ſufferers, they muſt needs have both means and power; the *former*, becauſe the abuſe of ſuch means conſtitutes the very eſſence of ſin; the *latter*, becauſe the power of not ſinning is eſſential to liberty.

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§ 9. A "perfect accountable moral agent in the ſtate of *original probation*, left to ſtand or fall according to *mere equity*," is a being who has the actual enjoyment of the chief good; ſuitable and ſufficient means of acting rightly; with the power, or cauſe of ſinning; and a power, or liberty of not ſinning.*

1. He is a being that not only has a *capacity* for enjoying, but has the *actual enjoyment* of the chief good. The want of this enjoyment in any being muſt be either becauſe he loſt it, or becauſe he never had it; in this caſe it can not be the *former*, for that would involve the contradiction, that he is an offender *before he* tranſgreſſes any law; not the *latter*, for then he has not what is perfective of his nature, as a moral agent, without his own fault, which is incompatible.—Again;

2. Such a moral agent is one who has a ſuitableneſs and ſufficiency of *means* for acting rightly, in order to preſerve that enjoyment. If he has no ſuch *means*, he is laid under a *natural impoſſibility* of ſecuring the ultimate end of his exiſtence; that is,

* The propriety of the above definitions relative to "moral agents," may be queſtioned by ſome readers who only reflect on the definitions commonly given; but all I demand is, that my future reaſoning be judged according to my *own* definition, which is adopted not through the affectation of novelty, but the expediency of the caſe. It would have been eaſy to ſay, "A moral agent is a being who is capable of actions poſſeſſing a moral quality;" but this, though true, would have contributed nothing to the removal of ſome difficulties I had in view; and of two inconveniences, I preferred a new explanation of old terms to the invention of new terms to ſuit my definitions.

he could not act rightly, and thereby preſerve his *happineſs*, though his diſpoſition and will were ever ſo upright; which is to ſay, in fact, he is no moral agent. And the ſame conſequence follows if the means are not ſuitable in their nature, or ſufficient to their end, for if *unſuitable*, they are the ſame as *no* means; and if *not ſufficient* to lead to the propoſed end, ſuppoſing they are uſed aright, they poſſeſs not the eſſential nature of all means.—Moreover;

3. Such a moral agent is one who has the *power* or *cauſe of ſinning*. If he has no power or cauſe of deviating from rectitude, when poiſed in the balance of mere equity, he is not *defectible;* but defectibility is eſſential to every created nature, therefore he has the power of ſinning. Beſide, the very idea of *accountableneſs* implies a *poſſibility* of receding from the rule of right. And this power, in the moſt abſolute ſenſe of the word, is truly his *own*. Grant him rational exiſtence, and he has *power* to ſin if permitted.—But

4. He has alſo a *power* or *liberty of not ſinning*. This muſt be allowed, elſe it would follow that the *moral* creature is under a *phyſical* neceſſity of ſinning; which would deſtroy his accountableneſs, and ſubvert that freedom which, *in equity*, is eſſential to all free agents. (§ 3.)—The fact is, that this power or liberty conſiſts in a *medium* or *neutrality* between a phyſical impulſe to ſin, and an efficient power of acting well. The *former* extreme, his being *phyſically impelled* to ſin, is not only unworthy of GOD, but is in its own nature *impoſſible;* for ſin has no *efficient* cauſe but a *deficient* one only, as will be explained in the ſequel. Were the proper

nature

nature of ſin carefully conſidered, we ſhould never hear of the abſurdity, the blaſphemous impiety, of GOD being the *Author of ſin.* The *latter* extreme, (which is but too often taken for granted without examination) that a perfect moral agent in a ſtate of original probation has of himſelf an *efficient*, or a ſort of independent *power of acting well*, will be examined in our progreſs, (chap. iv.) and ſhewn to be unfounded in truth, diſhonourable to GOD, and the ſource of much error.

In the mean time I would briefly obſerve, that to ſuppoſe a created being poſſeſſed of *ſuch power to preſerve* himſelf, is the ſame as to make an accountable agent *indefectible;* for wherein can its defectibility conſiſt, but in its having no independent *efficient power* of preſerving itſelf. If a being be *created*, it muſt be dependent; dependent in its eſſence, qualities, and operations; and if *thus dependent*, it has no *efficient* power *to preſerve itſelf.*—On the contrary, if it has no *deficient* power of deviating from rectitude, it is not in the rank of moral agents. —Such is the *awful prerogative* of JEHOVAH, as the moral Governor; and ſuch the *abſolute dependence* of a moral agent!

§ 10. By "*moral evil*," or *ſin*, I underſtand, "a deviation from perfect moral rectitude. To illuſtrate this definition,—which is the ſame with that of St. John, "ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law," if by the term "*law*" we underſtand "perfect moral rectitude"—obſerve:

1. What I call "perfect moral rectitude" is the

ſtandard to which every moral agent *ought to be* conformed according to the conſtituted relation of things, which is the effect of the will of GOD, and agreeable to his holy Nature. Rectitude, therefore, differs from Equity, only as a ſtandard of meaſure differs from actual meaſure, or as evenneſs differs from a balance. The foundation of equity is rectitude; and that of rectitude is the ſupreme Eſſence.

2. A *continuation* in a ſtate of "perfect moral rectitude" depends upon univerſal conformity to the conſtituted nature and relation of things. Thus, for inſtance, man in his primæval ſtate, ſtood related to all the objects around him in the univerſe. Every capacity of mind and every organ of ſenſe, had various objects ſuited to gratify and render happy its own nature. But any deliberate miſtake in the choice or uſe of theſe innumerable good things,—as to time, place, degree, ſubordination, or the like,—formed a deviation from perfect moral rectitude, and conſtituted man a ſinner.

3. A moral agent is *capable* of "deviation from rectitude," by reaſon of a cauſe of defectibility inſeparable from a created nature, which may be called a *metaphyſical tendency* to failure. If otherwiſe, his actual defection would be impoſſible. For how could he *act* amiſs if he had no propenſity of *any kind* to the wrong act? And how could he have that *propenſity*, without *ſome kind* of defect in the *diſpoſition?* A good act argues a good propenſity, and *that* a good diſpoſition; becauſe good in every reſpect proceeds from GOD: but not ſo a *deviation* from rectitude.

4. The

4. The ſinfulneſs of an *act* conſiſts in the will fixing on an object of choice, which, though good in itſelf, is not *ſuitable* for the end propoſed by the agent. Or, in other words, the badneſs of a moral act conſiſts in the agent propoſing to himſelf a different end, in the uſe of any object, from that which GOD propoſes. While the ſinfulneſs of a *diſpoſition* conſiſts in the tendency it has to make ſuch a perverted choice.

5. Sin has not an *efficient*, but only a *deficient cauſe*. Whatever has a real poſitive entity is of GOD, as its efficient, and therefore is good; but ſin is evil, and therefore its cauſe is a *deficient* one. Conſequently, *ſin* cannot be the object of any divine decree; and yet, as a ſhadow is known by the ſubſtance it refers to, and may give occaſion and riſe to poſitive acts, ſo may ſin be known to infinite intelligence, in every poſſible caſe, by the good to which it is oppoſed, and may give occaſion and riſe to poſitive acts in the divine decrees and operations.

§ 11. LIBERTY is a term which is made uſe of in very various, and often in a vague ſenſe. But, not to enumerate the different *kinds* of Liberty, I ſhall confine myſelf to that alone, which is appropriate and eſſential to moral agents. By this "*liberty*," therefore, I underſtand "a power to chooſe, out of divers things, whatever appears eligible; and, in all inſtances of reſponſibility, to act according to volition." A power to chooſe *only one thing*, is no moral power, no true freedom; for liberty, in the

ſenſe here uſed, neceſſarily implies, where the intellect is finite, a *poſſibility* of erring; whereas, if there be but *one* thing to chooſe, or one concluſion to make, there can be no room for miſtake or deviation. Nor can any one be *free* in his choice, but he who chooſes what *appears* to him eligible; to chooſe otherwiſe is not to exerciſe freedom, but to be led about as a blind beggar, by the hand of chance equally blind, or elſe by ſuch a fixed natural neceſſity, as is totally incompatible with a moral ſtate.

§ 12. "*Neceſſity*," alſo, is a term that has been productive of many and great diſputes. But is there *any kind* of neceſſity to which a moral agent can be ſubject? Yes: for

1. The human *body* is ſubject to the common laws of nature, which operate by a *phyſical* neceſſity. It is *neceſſarily* ſubject to the laws of gravitation, coheſion, fermentation, putrefaction and diſſolution. It is *neceſſarily* ſubject to vibratory motions from objects ſeen, heard, ſmelt, taſted and felt. It is moreover *neceſſarily* ſubject to the practicable free commands of the will, and all involuntary motions.

2. The human *mind* alſo is ſubject to *phyſical* neceſſity; for it is *neceſſarily* ſubject to that kind, degree, and perpetuity of exiſtence which the will of GOD appoints. It is conſtantly and *neceſſarily* attracted, by the energy of its Maker, according to the general law of its conſtitution, to the chief good, and the greateſt apparent preſent good. It is under a *neceſſity* of chooſing one object or conſequence out of two or more propoſed. No condition,

tion, no art or evaſion, is capable of preventing this; and the effect muſt needs be accounted morally good or bad. It is under a *neceſſity* of chooſing out of the repoſitory of its own knowledge or ſenſation, which is but a very ſmall ſtock compared with the boundleſs variety of objects that are perceivable.

It is proper, however, to remark, that this phyſical neceſſity, relative to the human body and mind, is controulable by *miraculous* interpoſition. There is no law of nature whatever, which is the reſult of poſitive will, but may be ſuſpended or altered if no decree to the contrary prohibit. This is plain to any one who perceives the important difference between a *phyſical* and a *decretive* neceſſity, which are but too commonly confounded by ſome modern *philoſophical* Neceſſitarians. — This leads to another remark:

3. Every moral agent is the ſubject of an *hypothetical neceſſity* of the event; that is, from one thing being laid down as a certain poſition, in an ideal ſyſtem, another thing will infallibly follow as an effect of it. For inſtance, if I am formed a creature, it *neceſſarily* follows, without exception, that I muſt be abſolutely dependent on the Creator; if I am made accountable, a free uſe of means is the *neceſſary* conſequence of that poſition. If matter, motion, and gravitation be ſuppoſed; contrariety, claſhing, and corruption *neceſſarily* follow in the material world. If a moral ſyſtem be ſuppoſed, every creature in it muſt *neceſſarily* partake, in

ſome degree, of holineſs or ſin, of happineſs or miſery.

4. Every moral agent is the ſubject of a *decretive neceſſity* of the event; that is, every thing but moral evil, (which cannot poſſibly from its very nature, be the object of any decretive act of GOD) relating to the moral agent, his natural endowments and valuable moral qualities, muſt be the *neceſſary* effect of the divine decree. What was once in the claſs of poſſibles only (as were the things juſt mentioned) becomes by a decree certainly future, and therefore neceſſary. — Nearly akin to this is,

5. That *neceſſity*, or *certainty* * as ſome chooſe to call it, which is oppoſed to abſolute contingence. To GOD nothing is contingent or fortuitous, though many things are ſo to us. Contingence is a *relative* idea; the ſame thing may be contingent to

* "Metaphyſical or philoſophical neceſſity is nothing different from *certainty*. I ſpeak not now of the certainty of knowledge, but the certainty there is in things themſelves, which is the foundation of the certainty of the knowledge of them; or that wherein lies the ground of the infallibility of the propoſition which affirms them. — Philoſophical neceſſity is really nothing elſe than the full and fixed connection between the things ſignified by the ſubject and predicate of a propoſition, which affirms ſomething to be true. When there is ſuch a connection, then the thing affirmed in the propoſition is neceſſary, in a philoſophical ſenſe; whether any oppoſition, or contrary effort be ſuppoſed, or ſuppoſable in the caſe, or no. When the ſubject and predicate of a propoſition, whi.h affirms the exiſtence of any thing, either ſubſtance, quality, act, or circumſtance, have a full or certain connection, then the exiſtence or being of that thing is ſaid to be neceſſary in a metaphyſical ſenſe." EDWARDS's Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will, p. 22. Lond. 1775.

to one being which is not ſo at all to another. It would be infinitely *degrading* to God to ſuppoſe that *any thing* is contingent to him. While *we* foreſee *nothing* as infallibly certain, except upon a divine teſtimony; God's previſion is ſo abſolute, and ſo univerſal as to comprehend *every thing*. Hence if two effects are not preciſely the ſame, we may be ſure there was a *reaſon* of the difference, though not by us perceiveable. Whereas if there be an effect perfectly contingent to God, it muſt be an effect without any aſſignable cauſe whatever; and then we may as well ſay, that the univerſe exiſts without a cauſe. The conſequence of this would be, an impoſſibility to demonſtrate a firſt cauſe; which is both abſurd and impious to imagine.

Having defined and explained the principal controverted terms relating to our ſubject, we now proceed to take a view of the moral government of God.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Containing a View of the moral Government of GOD with reſpect to mankind.

SECT. I.

Of MAN, the ſubject of moral government.

§ 1. *That man is a ſubject of moral government, taken for granted.* § 2. *Man was made upright.* § 3. *His preſent ſtate is very different.* § 4. *The ſtate of the intellect.* § 5. *And of the will.* § 6. *Wherein conſiſt man's defects and duty, explained and illuſtrated.* § 7. *His defects not excuſable.* § 8. *How this ſtate is to be accounted for.* § 9. *Obligations of perfection are proportionable to means.* § 10. *But ſince the means afforded are miſimproved, all men are found guilty.*

§ 1. WE ſhall here take it for granted that man is a ſubject of GOD's moral government, and therefore accountable for his actions, propenſities, and diſpoſitions. To confute the denial of this poſition would lead us to combat Atheiſm; which is an abſurdity ſo monſtrous that a formal refutation of it is a compliment which it does not deſerve. (Introd. § 1.)

§ 2. It

§ 2. It has been obſerved before, (ch. i. § 3, 8.) that a ſubject of moral government is poſſeſſed of a CAPACITY for enjoying the chief good, which capacity includes *intellect*, *will*, and *freedom*; and if *perfect*, he actually *enjoys* the chief good, and every inferior good in a regular ſubordination to that higher end. This is the character of every moral agent in a ſtate of original probation. But ſuch an agent has alſo a ſuitableneſs and ſufficiency of MEANS to preſerve that enjoyment; and, if he have not tranſgreſſed the line of perfect moral rectitude, not one of the means, however numerous, has been abuſed; not one object internal or external, paſt, preſent, or future, has been over-valued or under-valued; every diſpoſition, inclination, thought, deſire, volition, and action, is exactly as it *ought* to be. And, finally, ſuch an agent is poſſeſſed of FREEDOM, or a *power* to ſin, and not to ſin; the *former*, becauſe accountable; the *latter*, becauſe not *impelled* to ſin, or to the ſinfulneſs of any act, by any appointment, inſtrument, or immediate concourſe of the firſt cauſe, whoſe ever-acting uninterrupted energy produces all good, and *only* good continually. This was the ſtate of Adam and Eve before their tranſgreſſion. *God made man* UPRIGHT. *And God ſaw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was* VERY GOOD.

§ 3. But is this the *preſent* ſtate of man? Sad experience, I believe, proves the contrary. Let us obſerve this matter with the moſt calm attention and the moſt impartial diſcernment in our power.

The

The outward actions of men are the beſt evidences of their diſpoſitions. If therefore it be found, *in fact*, that the *chief good* is neglected or undervalued, the line of moral uprightneſs is tranſgreſſed. And if this be found an *univerſal* fact, reſpecting every perſon from earlieſt life, it forms undeniable proof that all men are degenerate. But how ſhall we inveſtigate and aſcertain this intereſting fact? If we appeal to inſpired narratives and documents, the verdict is, that *all have ſinned*, and that there is *none righteous, no not one*; but as we are treating of GOD'S moral government, it may be thought neceſſary to inquire into the *reaſons*, the righteous grounds of the fact.

§ 4. We daily find, by growing indubitable experience, that, in the preſent ſtate of things, the human *intellect* does not *repreſent all the objects* by which the mind might be beſt modified, and thereby the will moved. It does not reſemble the light of open day, the unclouded *ſun* at noon, which illuminates all reflecting ſurfaces around us; but ſerves only as a *torch* or *candle* to conduct our wandering feet in a dark night. And this mental power, properly ſpeaking, makes but a *mere repreſentation* of objects, having no *active* influence on the will; and therefore, this repreſentation, ſmall as it is, does not *enſure* the beſt uſe of the good ſo repreſented. Thus we ſee, that as far as the *intellect* is concerned, the objects are but *few*, and thoſe few but *merely* repreſented.

§ 5. Let us now ſee how the mind, in its preſent ſtate, is qualified to improve this good, in virtue of its

its *liberty*. We ever chooſe the greateſt apparent good, or, more accurately, the *will* is ever *as the greateſt apparent good*. To ſuppoſe otherwiſe leads to a great abſurdity; for it would then imply, that we chooſe, in ſome caſes, what, *upon the whole*, we deemed beſt for us not to chooſe: that is, we chooſe evil, *as evil*; which is incompatible with our mental conſtitution. But if *that* be the limit of the intellect, and *this* the condition of liberty, it follows, that what appears to us preferable *may be* really and eventually *not* ſo.

§ 6. Man, therefore, in the preſent ſtate, reſembles one who employs the light of a candle for the purpoſe of ſeeking what he wants. He is in a large room, which is abundantly ſtored with objects, ſome valuable, and many unſuitable to his immediate real wants, and therefore to him worthleſs. Whatever is illuminated, and falls under his obſervation, of that he forms an eſtimate. He gives invariably the preference to what *appears* to him preferable, all things conſidered. Now his imperfection lies in his not employing his light to illuminate *other* objects, when he is conſcious that thoſe he views do not contain the chief good, or that he does not improve them for acquiring or retaining that momentous object. That appears to him preferable which a mind morally upright views as not preferable; and that appears to him a thing to be choſen for its own ſake, which *ought* to be choſen only for a higher end.

Again: God has communicated to the ſoul, as a firm and invariable principle, a tendency towards

good

good in general. But it never chooſes what is not repreſented to it by the light of the underſtanding. It is very capable, however, of quitting a good repreſented and enjoyed, though a better does not actually and diſtinctly appear; becauſe it is *conſcious*, from its general tendency, that a greater good than what it has yet experienced is *attainable*. Thus its general tendency to good keeps the mind ever in expectation, and its great fault conſiſts in a temporary but idolatrous *reſting* in what is not the chief good. And this idolatry is committed not only when an inferior good is falſely deemed preferable to another, but alſo when a good which is really preferable is not choſen with reference and in ſubordination to the chief.

Moreover: the will, in its preſent progreſs to the chief good, is not unlike a traveller who aims at his wiſhed for home. Were it perfect day-light, he might diſcern a ſtraight, plain path; but being overtaken by the night, he has only a torch or candle, as *a light ſhining in a dark place*, to direct his wandering ſteps. He has *loſt* his path. His *duty* conſiſts in his employing the light he has to find it, as the means of conducting him to his deſtined home; and his *fault* lies in his growing indifferent about the path of ſafety, and indulging a temporary *ſatisfaction* with what his light but partially and ineffectually repreſents to him. He never changes his courſe but by checking his guide, and ordering him to ſeek another courſe which may prove more ſatisfactory; and this, which is always in his power, he neglects.

In

In this ſtate of darkneſs and uncertainty, *ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth*, divine revelation finds the children of men. It propoſes a brighter light, and a ſurer clue, than any they poſſeſs of their own. It propoſes a divine leader to conduct into all neceſſary truth. But alas! *men love darkneſs rather than light becauſe their deeds are evil.* This is the great cauſe of condemnation. All, if left to themſelves, *walk in the vanity of their mind, having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart.* Chriſt is the life of men, but *they will not come unto him that they might have life.* He is the ſun of righteouſneſs, and light of the world, but thoſe who walk in the ſhadow of death and on the brink of perdition, refuſe his benefits. Hence the *juſtice* of their final ruin. And thoſe whoſe advantages are more circumſcribed tranſgreſs by miſimproving thoſe they have.

§ 7. But man's preſent ſtate of darkneſs and depravity, the darkneſs of his underſtanding and the depravity of his diſpoſition, by no means *excuſes* him from ſubjection to the moral governor. His receding from perfect moral rectitude makes no difference in his *obligations.* For to ſay that a *moral power* is neceſſary, as well as *liberty* and *means* of improvement, to lay him under obligation of conformity to the rule of right, is to ſay, *either*, that man is *incapable* of abuſing his liberty; *or*, that on ſuch abuſe GOD is *bound* to reſtore him immediately

diately to perfect rectitude, each of which is abſurd. In proportion, indeed, that *phyſical* power is wanting, the ſubject is not accountable; but the more a *moral* power is wanting the more *culpable* he is, for in that ſame degree has he receded from rectitude. And this *muſt* be the caſe, except we ſay that our moral ability remains perfectly the ſame *after* diſobedience as it was *before*; and then it would follow that our moral ability ſuſtains, in that reſpect, no inconvenience from innumerable tranſgreſſions; but this is directly contrary to the well known *fact* of moral habits.

§ 8. Here it is natural to aſk, Whence proceed theſe ſtreams of depravity and confuſion? The preſent race of human beings had an ultimate progenitor; the firſt man, Adam. As mankind, therefore, do not coexiſt independently, but riſe to exiſtence ſucceſſively by deſcent from father to ſon, we are bound to conſider the whole race as one great *ſyſtem*, of which every ſucceeding part depends on the preceding, as much as any ſucceeding ſpecies of plants depends on the *firſt plant* of that ſpecies. Nor is it conceiveable, if the firſt of our race *loſt* the enjoyment of the chief good *prior* to his having any deſcendants, how his poſterity could riſe ſucceſſively into being *poſſeſſed* of it. As well may we ſay that ſtreams of water may riſe higher than their ſource, or that we may gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thiſtles. *Can a fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? or a vine figs?* then, indeed, but not before, may the deſcendants of Adam be conceived

ceived to ſpring into exiſtence conformably to the moral ſtandard of their original nature, or in poſſeſſion of holineſs and happineſs. *By one man ſin entered into the world*, the ſyſtem of mankind, *and death by ſin:* not only the *diſſolution* of the body followed, (which in caſe of continued perfection would have been miraculouſly prevented from taking its natural courſe like other animal bodies,) but, what is far more important, the *ſpirit of life* was loſt from the ſoul. As a tree withers when the *vital ſap* is gone, and the animal dies when the *vital principle* ceaſes to operate; ſo the *ſpiritual life* or well-being of an accountable creature departs when it loſes the poſſeſſion of the chief good.

§ 9. According to equity, man's obligations to be perfect are in proportion to the exhibition of *means* ſuited to that end. Thus, *becauſe the inviſible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, all men are without excuſe.* And in proportion as any have additional diſcoveries, are they additionally obliged to improve them. A mind reaſonably affected with the human frame, ſuppoſing every other object were ſealed up in darkneſs, would ſay devoutly: "I am fearfully "and wonderfully made; I am not my own, but "the property of an all-wiſe, almighty, and bene-"volent being; let me never withhold his *due* from "him, but renounce myſelf to his abſolute diſ-"poſal perpetually." Thus the moſt benighted of human kind is not deſtitute of *means*, ſo far as to juſtify his accountableneſs; what then ſhall we ſay

of thoſe who live in the open blaze of divine exhibited benefits? To whom the goſpel of GOD, that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared? How inconceivably great muſt their obligations be! Bleſſings high as heaven, and deep as our helpleſs miſeries, demand no ſmall ſhare of affection and grateful obedience. We ſhall have occaſion to reſume this idea in the next *Section*, when treating of the rule of moral government.

§ 10. But what is the real *fact* with reſpect to men's *improvement* of the means they have? Can it be *proved* that there *ever exiſted* a mere man who was as perfect as he had *means* of being ſo? I am confident it cannot. If ſo, then, here is an incontrovertible ground of *perſonal* delinquency, culpableneſs, and expoſedneſs to *penal* evil, the neceſſary effect of *moral* evil. If GOD therefore ſhould mark iniquity, and give to every one his *due*, who could avoid the fate of the wicked and unprofitable ſervant? * *All are gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Every mouth is ſtopped, and all the world is become guilty before God.*

* Matt. xxv. 30.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of the RULE of moral Government.

§ 1. *The foundation of this rule is the* RELATION *ſubſiſting between God and man.* § 2. *Hence reſults the* MORAL LAW. § 3. *The law reſults, not merely from what man now is, but alſo from the ſtate of original probation in which was placed our progenitor.* § 4. *The diſcovery of new relations produces new obligations.* § 5. *Poſitive Laws morally oblige.*

§ 1. THE immediate foundation of that rule which is the great ſtandard of moral government over mankind, is the *relation* ſubſiſting between the divine Governor and man the governed. But how ſhall we aſcertain this relation? There ſeems to be no other ſatisfactory method but by fixing the *true characters* of the beings related, and from thence to deduce the relation itſelf. Let us then obſerve:

1. GOD is a being poſſeſſed of all poſſible perfection. He is ſelf-exiſtent, independent, and all-ſufficient; he is eternal and infinite; he is infinitely benevolent, wiſe, and powerful; he is infinitely juſt, and yet abſolutely ſovereign; ſo juſt, that he wrongeth none, but giveth to every one to the full extent of his true claim; and ſo abſolutely ſovereign, that he never fails to ſecure his own ends, which are ever benevolent and wiſe.

2. Man is a being abſolutely dependent on God for his exiſtence, properties, and real acts; yet he has a *capacity* of intellect and will, and a *power* which we call freedom; he is made capable of *knowing* God, and therefore of religion, which belongs to no irrational creature, however ſagacious in other reſpects; he is made capable of *loving* God as the ſupreme good and ſuitable reſt of the active principle of volition, a privilege peculiar to moral agents.

3. God makes an *exhibition* of himſelf and other inferior good things to man, and *beſtows* upon him favours and benefits innumerable. The wants of his body are provided for, and the means of comfort pointed out in the various ways of providence. The wants of the ſoul are conſulted, ſo that there is no mental faculty, no principle of affection, but has preſented to it a correſponding object. Hence reſults,

§ 2. The rule of moral government, which may be called the *moral law*. This rule, or law, is the immediate or *proximate* ground of moral obligation; the *intermediate* is the decretive will of God which conſtituted thoſe relations from whence the law reſults; and the *ultimate* is the divine intellect and eſſence. — Hence we ſee, that the "moral law" is not a *ſeparate thing*, which may be abſtractedly conſidered without any reference to the characters of God and of man, and the conſequent relations; but its very exiſtence, its extent and obliging power, bear an exact proportion to characters, and the *relations*

relations conſtituted by creation, providence, or grace.

§ 3. But it is neceſſary to obſerve here, That the obliging law reſults, not merely from what man *now is*, but alſo from what the human ſyſtem was originally. Were not this the caſe, *ignorance* and the *conſcious want* of the chief good, would be no fault, which would be impious to aſſert. If God had a right to *manifeſt* that he is ſtrictly equitable as well as merciful, in his tranſactions with the father of our race; if it was right that men ſhould exiſt by *ſucceſſion*, and that the ſon ſhould be *as* the father that begat him; and if the tranſgreſſion of a law does not annihilate its authority to oblige; it follows, that all Adam's poſterity are bound to be as perfect as *he* was, according to the *objective means* afforded. If they have the *ſame* phyſical capacities and powers as he had, and if "the inviſible things of God may be *known*," (and therefore *enjoyed*,) by the ſtupendous monuments of creation and providence, did not the fault lie in their own diſpoſitions, it is manifeſt that they are bound to be *perfect* as Adam was. And if they have additional diſcoveries to what he had, by way of moral means, their obligations muſt riſe in proportion. — Hence we are led to another concluſion;

§ 4. The diſcovery of new relations produces new obligations. And theſe diſcoveries are extremely various to various ſubjects. To whom much is given, of him much is required. To ſome

are given five talents, to others two, and to others one; to every man according to his ſeveral ability. *As many as have ſinned without law ſhall alſo periſh without law; and as many as have ſinned in the law ſhall be judged by the law; in the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt.* Thus the rule of moral government is greatly influenced by the different degrees of *revelation* afforded to the ſubject.

§ 5. In addition to that law which ariſes from the viſible and ſtated relation of things, GOD has reſerved for himſelf a right to enact, from time to time, *poſitive laws*, which have no apparent reaſon of injunction beſide the mere will or ſovereign authority of the Lawgiver. But the divine authority never enjoins impoſſibilities, and as the manifeſtation of his will is a ſufficient reaſon why we ſhould comply with his requiſitions, hence ariſes our obligation, from *moral* conſiderations, to obey all *poſitive* commands.*

SECT.

* See the ſubject of poſitive laws and inſtitutions, with the method of aſcertaining what is *poſitive* and what is *moral* in the ſame command, in *Antipædob. Exam.* Vol. I. Chap. i. *paſſim.* — See alſo, further obſervations on the *Will of God* as the *rule of moral government* in a *Diſcourſe on the Influence of religious Practice on our Inquiries after Truth*, p. 13—20, 31. See, moreover, SECT. VII. of this chapter.

SECT. III.

Of the different DISPENSATIONS of revealed religion.

§ 1. *The defection of our firſt parents.* § 2, 3. *What would have been the conſequence of Adam's continued obedience?* § 4, 5. *What the fate of his fallen poſterity without a Saviour?* § 6. *General preparatory remarks on all the divine diſpenſations.* § 7. *The Adamic diſpenſation of grace.* § 8. *The Noahic.* § 9. *The Abrahamic covenant, or promiſe.* § 10. *St. Paul's comment on it.* § 11—19. *Obſervations on this covenant, and the apoſtle's reaſoning on it.* § 20. *The Moſaic covenant, or law.* § 21. *Explained by Jeremiah and Paul.* § 22—28. *Obſervations thereon.* § 29—33. *The diſtinguiſhing character of the goſpel covenant compared with the foregoing.*

§ 1. WHEN Adam and Eve tranſgreſſed the poſitive command, which was not to eat of a particular fruit in the garden of Eden, the death threatened, or the execution of the penal ſanction, followed. *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* A ſpiritual death *immediately* ſeized the ſoul; or that which may be moſt emphatically called the *life* of a perfect creature, forſook it as the *neceſſary* and not merely the *threatened* effect of the tranſgreſſion. *And unto Adam he ſaid,—In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of*

*it waſt thou taken: for duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return.** "Thou art no longer to expect my "ſovereign interpoſition to prevent that mortality, "to which, by the common laws of the univerſe, "thy frame tends." *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all.*†

§ 2. Obſerving that among men there awaits every conditional engagement a permanent conſequence on *either* ſide, many have been led to aſk, "What would have been the conſequence of "Adam's continued obedience?" But ſuch a queſtion evidently overlooks the nature of the ſubject. For it might as well be aſked, What would have been *another plan* of creation and providence, if the *preſent* had not been adopted? And this would further lead us to the fruitleſs enquiry, In how many different ways was it *poſſible* for GOD to make a univerſe? Every thing in the plan *actually* followed proceeds on the ſuppoſition of Adam's apoſtacy; therefore, to ſuppoſe his conſtant obedience, is not merely to ſuppoſe an alteration in a *ſingle part* of the divine ſcheme, but to ſubſtitute *another ſyſtem*.

§ 3. To give, however, a more direct reply to queſtions of this nature, I remark:

1. That Adam's continuance in perfection muſt have been owing to ſuch continued acts of GOD, as Adam had no true ground of claim to in equity. For though he was not impelled to ſin, he was not ſufficient of himſelf, without GOD's immediate and gratuitous

* Gen. iii. 17, 19. † Rom. v. 12.

gratuitous aſſiſtance, to preſerve his happy ſtate one moment; which poſition will, in the courſe of this Eſſay, be more profeſſedly diſcuſſed and confirmed. Therefore,

2. If God ever meant to ſhew to a moral ſyſtem that there was in him towards it perfect *equity* and ſovereign *mercy*, the ſuppoſition of Adam and his poſterity continuing perfect, muſt have been an impoſſibility. So that, in fact, the queſtion returns to this, Are the attributes of *equity* and *mercy* towards the human race to be manifeſted, or are they not? If they are, a continuance in a ſtate of perfection was not poſſible.

§ 4. Nearly akin to the preceding queſtion is the following: "What muſt have been the conſequence, reſpecting *fallen* Adam's poſterity in this world, on ſuppoſition that *no Saviour* had been provided? Muſt we not admit the multiplication of the ſpecies, and the enjoyment of the neceſſaries of ſubſiſtence, for a time, before they ſhould be fixed in a ſtate of puniſhment? In that caſe, what they enjoyed could not be the effect of mediatorial grace, but their *due in equity*, otherwiſe the demerit of the firſt offence muſt have been annihilation; and thus the human ſyſtem muſt have been deſtroyed as ſoon as it exiſted, and utterly removed out of the univerſe." — But *this* queſtion, as well as the other, ſeems to overlook the nature of the ſubject; and takes for granted an impoſſibility, that the ſuppoſed conſequence may take place, without ſuppoſing another world.

world. Whereas the truth is, that ſince the preſent plan of things, in all its parts, proceeds on the ſuppoſition of a Saviour provided, to ſuppoſe this removed is to ſuppoſe *another univerſe*. And what kind of contrivance muſt that be, which admits of moral evil to invade the ſyſtem, but excludes all ſalvation? Such a world does not appear to be worthy of the goodneſs of GOD, or conſiſtent with his wiſdom. With reverence I would obſerve:

§ 5. 1. To ſuffer men to live in a ſtate of ſin and rebellion, from age to age, for the ſake of propagating their ſpecies, and without any proviſion of redeeming grace, is not conſiſtent with divine *goodneſs*. How can it be conſiſtent with infinite goodneſs to give being to ſo many millions of intelligent creatures without *ſecuring* the happineſs of *one* of them? Not one of all the ſtupendous ſyſtem, on the ſuppoſition, is happy; and *only* juſtice in all its awful ſeverities is diſplayed. Such a conduct, indeed, could not be called unjuſt, but could it be ſaid to be marked with goodneſs? If it be *good* to manifeſt goodneſs, and eminently ſo to manifeſt mercy, ſuch a ſyſtem as the objection ſuppoſes, which excludes goodneſs and mercy, could not take place. Nor,

2. Could it be conſiſtent with divine *wiſdom* to place our repreſentative in circumſtances that made his fall certain, without any proviſion of recovering grace. Suppoſe our progenitor to repreſent his innumerable offſpring, to be placed in perfect *equilibrium* with reſpect to the event of his probation, and

and that his abuſe of his liberty was perfectly foreſeen from the beginning; I would then aſk, How can we reconcile the *certain* fall of the whole ſyſtem, and its inevitable everlaſting *ruin*, with divine wiſdom? Rather, would not this be a probable dictate, "Either let not the ſyſtem exiſt at all, or let there "be a reſerve made of ſalvation out of its ruin." To let juſtice *alone* reign, without mercy, is not good; and to ſuffer all men to periſh through want of previous contrivance, on previſion of apoſtacy, is not wiſe; and therefore ſuch a ſtate as the objection ſuppoſes was impoſſible. If there were no ſecond Adam, the Lord from heaven, it would not have been worthy of either the *goodneſs* or *wiſdom* of GOD to appoint a firſt Adam, who ſhould fall as the repreſentative of his poſterity; nor conſiſtent with the diſplay of his *equity* and *mercy* that he ſhould ſo interpoſe as to make him continue in the ſtate in which he was firſt placed. As far, therefore, as the providence and government of GOD are concerned in the preſent ſtate of things, we may ſafely ſay, "Whatever IS, is RIGHT."

§ 6. Seeing, then, that in the preſent plan *alone* does there appear any room left for an admixture of equity and mercy, we may ſee how well adapted it is, above every other ſuppoſed plan, for the full exerciſe of moral government. — But that we may the better comprehend this admixture, proportion and order, in the various, wonderful ſteps of the divine government through the different diſpenſations of time, it may be proper to remark,

1. That

1. That every exercise of equity, towards mankind, *presupposes* a display of grace for its foundation. If equity be exercised towards a state of perfect rectitude, it presupposes the favour of existence, and the grace of preservation to the moment of trial. If towards men as imperfect, it presupposes forbearance, or mercy announced, with different degrees of explicitness, according to the different dispensations under which they live. Hence the awful glory of future judgment!

2. There is no situation, or degree of advance in the divine favour, in this life, that in its own nature excludes the consequent exercise of mere equity, whereby the creature is endangered, from any given moment. Hence the foundation of constant holy fear, and studious diligence in the way of duty. And hence the propriety of addressing the chief of saints in such language as this: *Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.* —Wherefore,

3. While there is the exercise of equity in God, there is a foundation for man to *fear*; and while there is the exercise of grace, there is room for *hope*. While the day of grace continues, *despair* is rebellious ingratitude; and while God is an equitable Governor, to discard holy fear is irreverend *presumption*. The trembling jailor is *encouraged* to believe for salvation, and the apostle Paul *kept under* his body, lest he should lose his dependence on grace and be cast away. Thus the present plan, which

which regards men as fallen, but not gone beyond the confines of hope while in this world; as the ſubjects of equity or grace according to the deciſions of infinite wiſdom; is wonderfully well adapted for the fulleſt exerciſe of moral government.

§ 7. We now proceed to ſhew in what manner the divine Governor dealt with mankind after their deviation from rectitude, and conſequent expoſure to puniſhment. While man had not the leaſt claim upon GOD, either to reſtore that *life* which was now loſt, and is the well-being of the ſoul, or to ſuſpend the conſequence of immediate and permanent *ſuffering*; GOD was pleaſed in ſovereign mercy, to announce the MEANS of ſalvation: *And the Lord ſaid unto the ſerpent — I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed; it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.* — "Though I ſend forth the man from the garden of "Eden, to till the ground from whence he was "taken, I will not leave him without hope of re- "covered happineſs. The woman ſhall have a "*deſcendant*, who ſhall prove a mighty *deliverer* "from ſin and miſery, though he accompliſh it in "the way of *ſuffering*."

The truth and importance of this promiſe muſt be daily corroborated by the inſtitution of worſhip, the expreſſed approbation of ſervices, the pleaſures of religious obedience, with occaſional viſible or audible manifeſtations of the divine glory. Enoch, the ſeventh from Adam, not only *walked with God*, but was an eminent *prophet* in his day. He announced

nounced clearly the final judgment, with the different fate of ſaints and ſinners. "Behold, ſaid he, "the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his ſaints, "to execute judgment upon all, and to convince "all that are ungodly among them of all their "ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches which ungodly "ſinners have ſpoken againſt him." * After this favourite of heaven had lived holily, and faithfully exhorted his cotemporaries on the moſt important ſubjects, for about three hundred years, he was taken to glory in a miraculous way. And his tranſlation was a ſtanding monument of mercy to that and every ſubſequent age.

It ſhould be here obſerved, that whatever intimations of *grace*, precepts, or ſanctions, were made during this period, they were intended for *univerſal uſe*. There ſeems to have been no bar put in the way of any from receiving the exhibited teſtimony as the foundation of faith, hope, and obedience. *Mercy* is proclaimed to man as guilty, depraved, and helpleſs; if he is found penitent, believing, and obedient, he is ſafe; if otherwiſe, what was exhibited for life becomes the innocent occaſion of ſeverer condemnation. It is no part of the *equity* of government to enſure compliance with the overtures of grace; but if any obey, it is the effect of ſovereign favour.

§ 8. Of Noah it is expreſsly ſaid, that *he found grace in the eyes of the Lord.*† God had a favour to him

* Jude 14, 15. † Gen. vi. 8.

him above all the inhabitants of the world beſide; for *all fleſh had corrupted his way upon the earth*, which was *filled with violence*. And the Lord ſaid unto Noah, *Come thou and all thy houſe into the ark; for thee have I ſeen righteous before me in this generation.** After juſtice had cleared the earth of its rebellious inhabitants by the deluge, God's manifeſtation of grace to Noah and his family becomes, in effect, the origin of a *new diſpenſation*. And as the inſtitution of ſacrifices was a ſign and ſeal of the former diſpenſation of mercy, ſo now, the covenant being *renewed*, an *additional* ſeal is appended. "And God "ſpake unto Noah, and to his ſons with him, "ſaying, And I, behold, I *eſtabliſh* my covenant "with you, and with your ſeed after you. And "God ſaid, This is the *token* of the covenant — I "do ſet my bow in the cloud."† — I have had occaſion before to remark on this paſſage, "That "the covenant or divine charter, firſt given to "Noah, *included* the preceding; it was the *ſame* "*covenant* with additional grants. — Leſt Noah "ſhould infer that the drowning of the world in "wrath diſannulled the well known covenant, God "diſſipates his fears, by ſaying, I will *eſtabliſh* "my covenant."‡ No former exhibition of mercy, or preceptive appointment, was repealed, but confirmed and augmented.

§ 9. When we come to the time of Abraham, the language of grace becomes more deciſive, conſpicuous, and rich. "I will make of thee, ſays "God,

* Gen. vii. 1. † Gen. ix. 8—13.
‡ Antipædob. Exam. Vol. I. Chap. iii. § 20. p. 238.

" God, a great nation, and I will bleſs thee, and " make thy name great; and thou ſhalt be a bleſſ- " ing: and I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and " curſe him that curſeth thee: and in thee ſhall all " families of the earth be bleſſed."—" After theſe " things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in " a viſion, ſaying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy " ſhield, and thy exceeding great reward."—" And " when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the " Lord appeared to Abram, and ſaid unto him, I " am the Almighty God; walk before me and be " thou perfect.—I will *eſtabliſh* my covenant between " me and thee and thy ſeed after thee, in their " generations for an everlaſting covenant, to be a " God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee.— " And God ſaid unto Abraham, Thou ſhalt keep " my covenant therefore, thou, and thy ſeed after " thee in their generations." * St. Paul calls this language addreſſed to Abraham, " *the goſpel preached unto him*," implying that ſalvation was by *grace* to him as well as to the Gentiles.

§ 10. The apoſtle's illuſtration of Abraham's covenant, with his reaſoning upon it, deſerves our careful attention; but becauſe what he advances on the ſubject is of conſiderable length, the reader will find it collected into one view, and which he may conſult at his leiſure, in the note below.† — I proceed therefore,

§ 11. On

* Gen. xii. 2, 3. xv. 1. xvii. 1, 5, 7, 9.

† ' So then they which be of faith are bleſſed with faithful ' Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law, are ' under

§ 11. On the covenant itſelf, and the apoſtolic comment thereon, to make the following obſervations. What in the original grant is called a *covenant*, is by St. Paul termed a *promiſe*. "If the "inheritance be of the law, it is no more of pro- "miſe; but GOD gve it to Abraham by *promiſe*."

F Hence

'under the curſe: for it is written, "Curſed is every one that "continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the "law to do them." But that no man is juſtified by the law in the 'ſight of GOD, it is evident: for "The juſt ſhall live by faith." 'And the law is not of faith: but "The man that doeth them "ſhall live in them." Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of 'the law, being made a curſe for us: for it is written, "Curſed "is every one that hangeth on a tree:" that the bleſſing of Abra- 'ham *might* come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt; that 'we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith. 'Brethren, I ſpeak after the manner of men; "Though it be but "a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man diſannulleth, "or addeth thereto." Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the 'promiſes made. He ſaith not, "And to ſeeds, as of many:" 'but as of one, "And to thy ſeed," which is Chriſt. And this 'I ſay, that the covenant that was confirmed before of GOD in 'Chriſt, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, 'cannot diſannul that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect. 'For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promiſe; 'but GOD gave it to Abraham by promiſe. Wherefore then 'ſerveth the law? It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the 'ſeed ſhould come to whom the promiſe was made: and it was 'ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator 'is not a mediator of one; but GOD is one. Is the law then 'againſt the promiſes of GOD? GOD forbid: for if there had 'been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſ- 'neſs ſhould have been by the law. But the ſcripture hath con- 'cluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt 'might be given to them that believe.' Gal. iii. 9—22.

And again: 'Cometh this bleſſedneſs then upon the circum- 'ciſion only, or upon the uncircumciſion alſo? for we ſay that 'faith

Hence we learn, that what GOD calls his *covenant*, is not properly of the nature of a mutual agreement or *contract* between him and Abraham, but a free and ſovereign *grant* of the *chief good* to the unworthy and helpleſs creature. The exiſtence of the covenant did not depend on Abraham's acceptance of

' faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteouſneſs. How was it
' then reckoned? when he was in circumciſion, or in uncircum-
' ciſion? Not in circumciſion, but in uncircumſion. And he
' received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of
' the faith which he had, yet being uncircumciſed: that he might
' be the father of all them that believe though they be not circum-
' ciſed, that righteouſneſs might be imputed to them alſo; and
' the father of circumciſion to them who are not of the circum-
' ciſion only, but who alſo walk in the ſteps of that faith of our
' father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumciſed. For
' the promiſe that he ſhould be the heir of the world was not to
' Abraham, or to his ſeed, through the law, but through the
' righteouſneſs of faith. For if they which are of the law be
' heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe made of none effect:
' becauſe the law worketh wrath, for where no law is, there is no
' tranſgreſſion. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by
' grace; to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed, not
' to that only which is of the law, but to that alſo which is of the
' faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written,
" I have made thee a father of many nations,") before him whom
' he believed, even GOD who quickeneth the dead, and calleth
' thoſe things which be not as though they were. Who againſt
' hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many
' nations according to that which was ſpoken, " So ſhall thy ſeed
" be:" and being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own
' body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old,
' neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah's womb. He ſtaggered not at
' the promiſe of GOD through unbelief: but was ſtrong in faith
' giving glory to GOD. And being fully perſuaded that what he
' had promiſed, he was able alſo to perform. And therefore it
' was

of terms, any more than the exiſtence of the goſpel depends on our manner of hearing it; or the exiſtence of the ſun on men's thoughts about it. Abraham was ſelected from among his cotemporaries, and addreſſed in theſe aſtoniſhing words: "Fear not, Abram, I am thy *ſhield* and thy *exceeding great reward.*—I will be a GOD unto thee, "and to thy ſeed after thee." But,

§ 12. No *law* or rule of right, was ſufficient to effect the recovery of fallen ſinners. "If there "had been a law given which could have given "life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the "law." The apoſtle elſewhere ſays, That "the "law *is become weak through the fleſh*;" that is, the impotence of the law to make us righteous and happy ariſes from our defect. Let it have a ſub-

F 2 ject

'was imputed to him for righteouſneſs. Now it was not written 'for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us alſo, 'to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him that raiſed up 'Jeſus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, 'and was raiſed again for our juſtification. Rom. iv. 9—25.

And elſewhere he ſaith: 'When GOD made promiſe to Abra-'ham, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf, 'ſaying, "Surely bleſſing I will bleſs thee; and multiplying I "will multiply thee." And after he had patiently endured, he 'obtained the promiſe. For men verily ſwear by the greater; and 'an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtriſe. Wherein 'GOD willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of pro-'miſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an oath, 'that by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for 'GOD to lie, we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled 'for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us." Heb. vi. 13—18.

ject free from defect, as the man Chriſt Jeſus was, and it is no longer *weak*. To increaſe the number of precepts, to ſhew their excellency and reaſonableneſs, and to enforce them with the moſt awful and tremendous threatenings in caſe of diſobedience, are utterly unable of themſelves to effect our recovery, on account of our *moral weakneſs*. Therefore, "what the law could not do, in that it was "weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own "Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin, "condemned ſin in the fleſh." Hence "the "ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the "*promiſe* by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to "them that *believe*." Yet,

§ 13. The rational creature being accountable for its uſe or abuſe of all moral *means*, God condeſcends to ſhew what he requires as the *effect* of this proclamation and grant of his promiſe. *Walk before me and be thou perfect*. "If I reveal to thee "my everlaſting counſel of love, and aſſure thee of "my unſearchable riches of grace towards thee and "all the families of the earth; If I declare and "exhibit to thee a divine righteouſneſs as the "ground of thy juſtification, and future obedience, "and which thou art to receive by faith; ſee that "thou receive it for thy ſafety and comfort, and "improve it for the purpoſe of univerſal godli-"neſs." And thus the prophet many ages after: "He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; and "what doth the Lord require of thee? but to do "juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with "thy

" thy GOD." As the foundation of acceptable obedience, GOD ſhews us what is that *good*, that mercy, pardon, righteouſneſs, and happineſs we need; and then points out the required effects of thoſe favours, as our moſt reaſonable ſervice, juſtice, mercy, and humble dependence on our covenant GOD. When GOD ſays to Abraham, " Be thou perfect," he intends that his walk *before* or *with* GOD ſhould be *without any allowed ſin*. Moreover,

§ 14. The covenant or promiſe in its *exhibition*, belonged not only to Abraham, but alſo to his *ſeed*; and not only to the Jews, but alſo to the *Gentiles*. " I will bleſs them that bleſs thee; and in thy ſeed " ſhall *all families of the earth be bleſſed*. That *the* " *bleſſing* of Abraham might come *on the Gentiles*, " *through Jeſus Chriſt*. Cometh this bleſſedneſs then " upon the circumciſion only, or upon *the uncircum-* " *ciſion alſo?* He received the ſign of circumciſion, a " ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith which he " had, yet being uncircumciſed: that he might be " the father of *all them that believe* though they be " not circumciſed." Here, it is plain, a *free grant* was made, in the Abrahamic promiſe, to all men, Jews and Gentiles; that thereby they might have an inducement to believe, and receive righteouſneſs, bleſſedneſs, and the *chief good*. The language of the moral Governor virtually was, and continues to be, " You have by free gift and grant, the effect " of my ſovereign pleaſure and mercy, all neceſſary " *means* ſet before you, and I ſolemnly charge you " not to reject them as you value my favour, or

" would avoid my perpetual diſpleaſure. If you " reject happineſs as a *free gift*, how can you hope " to eſcape?"

§ 15. The way of *receiving* the exhibited bleſſings is by *faith*. " They which be of *faith* are bleſſed " with faithful Abraham. That the bleſſing of " Abraham might come on the Gentiles through " Jeſus Chriſt; that we might receive the promiſe " of the Spirit *through faith*. The ſcripture hath " concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith " of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that " *believe*." The law, the rule of right, can afford no relief to its tranſgreſſors; it can only condemn them to perdition. But righteouſneſs and happineſs are propoſed as bounties of ſovereign favour to every individual to whom the meſſage comes; if any receive the *gift* they are ſo far obedient and happy ſubjects, and in the way to final complete happineſs; but if they make light of it they are equitably condemned for their obſtinacy and ingratitude. Again,

§ 16. The righteous man's great work is to *live and walk by faith*, as an operative principle. " The " juſt ſhall *live by faith*. I am the Almighty GOD; " *walk before me* and be thou perfect." Faith was never deſigned to preclude obedience. And, on the other hand, " faith, if it hath not works, is " dead, being alone. Was not Abraham our fa- " ther juſtified by *works*," (not by a dormant, unactive, uninfluencing principle, but that which is *operative*)

operative) " when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon " the altar? Seeſt thou how faith wrought with " his works, and by works was faith made per- " fect." * The gift of righteouſneſs is no leſs ſubſervient and conducive to holy *obedience* than it is to *happineſs*. Faith is the ſpiritual life of the ſoul, and holy obedience its health. Faith is the prolific root, holy obedience is the fruit. Faith is the ſtable foundation, and holy obedience the ſuperſtructure. Faith is the ſeed, obedience the fruitful crop. *As the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.*

§ 17. The ſubſtance, the end, and the glory of the promiſe is *Chriſt*. " Now to Abraham and his " ſeed were the promiſes made; he ſaith not, and to " *ſeeds*, as of many, but as of one, and to thy *ſeed*, " *which is Chriſt*. All the promiſes of God *in him* " are yea, and *in him* Amen, unto the glory of " God." Were it not for Chriſt, " the ſeed of " the woman," and who is emphatically " *the ſeed*" of Abraham, we ſhould never have heard of any *other* ſeed inveſted with covenant privileges. *For his ſake* are all others noticed and bleſſed. All ceremonial obſervances were only " a ſhadow of " things to come; but *the body is of Chriſt*." He is " the *end* of the law," the Moſaic legiſlation, " and the prophets." Promiſes without Chriſt, would be as the ſolar ſyſtem without the ſun.

§ 18. God has given the moſt abundant aſſurances of the *immutability* of the promiſe. No precept,

* James ii. 17, 21, 22.

moral or poſitive, can diſannul it. "And this I "ſay, that the covenant that was confirmed before "of GOD, in Chriſt, the law, which was four hun- "dred and thirty years after, *cannot diſannul*, that "it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect. Is "the law *againſt* the promiſes of GOD? GOD for- "bid. Men verily ſwear by the greater, and an "oath for confirmation is to them an end of all "ſtrife. Wherein GOD willing more abundantly "to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the *immutability* "of his counſel confirmed it by an oath." The ſubject of the oath is the *immutability* of his counſel in the promiſe, or *grant of righteouſneſs* to ſinners. The *primary offer* is to ſinners, as ſuch, to the fallen race without reſtrictions; and whether they believe or not he continues *immutable* in his offer. *If we believe not he abideth faithful.* This is a glorious diſplay of the equity of his government. Hence

§ 19. All believers have the ſtrongeſt ground of conſolation conceivable. "That by two immut- "able things, in which it was impoſſible for GOD "to lie, we might have a *ſtrong conſolation* who have "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet "before us." GOD well knew our infirmities; to his word of promiſe he adds his oath. JEHOVAH ſware by himſelf, and it is impoſſible that he ſhould lie. He pledges his own bleſſed being for the truth of what he ſays. Why ſhould not this, therefore, put an end to all ſtrife in our minds and conſciences? He propoſes to the periſhing ſinner, and makes over for his perpetual uſe by promiſe and by oath, his readineſs

readineſs to reconcile ſinners to himſelf, to beſtow pardon, peace, righteouſneſs, life, Chriſt, himſelf, and eternal happineſs! How *equitable*, then, this concluſion? *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.*

§ 20. Without diſannulling the former promiſes, God gave by Moses to the Hebrews a great number of laws, ſome poſitive, and ſome moral, digeſted into one body. The whole may be called the *Moſaic covenant.* After the ſolemn preparation for receiving this covenant,* follows the rehearſal of the *formula*, or the *conſtitution* of the theocracy, by God himſelf, in ten ſections, commonly called the *ten commands*,† and afterwards a large code of poſitive laws and ceremonial rites, occaſionally intermixed with

* 'And Moſes went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him 'out of the mountain, ſaying, "Thus ſhalt thou ſay to the houſe "of Jacob, and tell the children of Iſrael, Ye have ſeen what I did "unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and "brought you unto myſelf. Now therefore, if you will obey my "voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye ſhall be a peculiar "treaſure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. "And ye ſhall be unto me a kingdom of prieſts, and an holy "nation. Theſe are the words which thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the "children of Iſrael." And Moſes came and called for the elders 'of the people, and laid before their faces all theſe words which the 'Lord commanded him. And all the people anſwered together, 'and ſaid, "All that the Lord hath ſpoken we will do." And 'Moſes returned the words of the people unto the Lord. And the 'Lord ſaid unto Moſes, "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick "cloud, that the people may hear when I ſpeak with thee, and "believe thee forever." Exod. xix. 3—9.

† Exod. xx. 3—17.

with moral precepts, merciful grants, conditional promiſes, and awful ſanctions.

§ 21. Conſiderable light is thrown on the nature of the Moſaic covenant and diſpenſation by the prophet Jeremiah and the apoſtle Paul.* And from what they ſay relating to the Moſaic covenant, compared with GOD's laſt diſpenſation of mercy through the goſpel, I would deduce the following concluſions.

§ 22. It was an act of ſovereign favour in GOD to take the people into covenant at all. "Thus "ſhalt

* Thus the *former*; 'Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, 'that I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and 'with the houſe of Judah: not according to the covenant that I 'made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand 'to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they 'brake, although I was an huſband unto them, ſaith the Lord: 'but this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of 'Iſrael; "After thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my law in "their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their "GOD, and they ſhall be my people. And they ſhall teach no "more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſay-"ing, *Know the Lord:* for they ſhall all know me, from the leaſt of "them to the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord: for I will forgive "their iniquity, and I will remember their ſin no more." Jer. xxxi. 29—34. And thus the *latter:* 'But now hath he (that is, 'Chriſt) obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how much alſo he 'is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was eſtabliſhed upon 'better promiſes. For if that firſt covenant had been faultleſs, 'then ſhould no place have been ſought for a ſecond. For find-'ing fault with them, he ſaith, "Behold, the days come, ſaith the "Lord, &c." In that he ſaith, "A new covenant," he hath 'made

" ſhalt thou ſay to the houſe of Jacob, and tell the " children of Iſrael; Ye have ſeen what I did " unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on " eagles wings, and brought you unto myſelf. " Now therefore if you will obey my voice indeed, " and keep my covenant, then ye ſhall be a pecu- " liar treaſure unto me above all people: for all " the earth is mine. And ye ſhall be unto me a " kingdom of prieſts, and an holy nation." There was no inherent excellency in the people, as GOD himſelf frequently reminded them, to *deſerve* a ſelection from among other people for the enjoyment of ſuch privileges. Nor does there appear to be in former *promiſes* any ground of obligation on the part of GOD, that he ſhould enter into this covenant with Iſrael; it remains therefore that it was done in purſuance of his *ſovereign purpoſe* and grace. However,

§ 23. This tranſaction had in it more of the nature of a *ſtrict covenant* than any thing that had been ſo called, in any preceding period, between God and men; and was perhaps more ſo than any event recorded in ſcripture. For all the federal ſolemnities during the moſaic economy were either ratifications of this, or ſubſervient and explanatory. And under the evangelical economy there is nothing of the kind. " Theſe are the words thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the " children

' made the firſt old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, ' is ready to vaniſh away. Then verily the firſt covenant had alſo ' ordinances of divine ſervice, and a worldly ſanctuary. For ' there was a tabernacle made, &c." Heb. viii. 6—13. ix. 1, 2.

" children of Iſrael. And Moſes came and called " for the elders of the people and laid before their " faces all theſe words which the Lord commanded " him. And all the people anſwered together, and " ſaid, All that the Lord hath ſpoken we will do. " And Moſes returned the words of the people " unto the Lord." Here we ſee a gracious *propoſal* in form from the Lord to the people; the people's public and formal *acceptance* of the terms propoſed; and the Lord's *avowal* of that acceptance. Moreover,

§ 24. The manner of making known to the people the divine will and requiſitions, particularly in proclaiming to them the *formula* of the covenant, clearly ſhews the magnitude and importance of the tranſaction. " And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, " Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the " people may hear when I ſpeak with thee, and " believe thee forever." After a ſolemn charge given to the people to prepare for the awful interview on the third day, it is added; " And it came " to paſs on the third day in the morning, that " there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick " cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the " trumpet exceeding loud; ſo that all the people " that was in the camp trembled. — And mount " Sinai was altogether on a ſmoke, becauſe the " Lord deſcended upon it in fire: and the ſmoke " thereof aſcended as the ſmoke of a furnace, and " the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the " voice of the trumpet ſounded long, and waxed " louder

" louder and louder, Moſes ſpake, and God anſwer-
" ed him by a voice. — And God ſpake all theſe
" words, ſaying, I am the Lord thy God, which
" have brought thee out of the land of Egypt,
" out of the houſe of bondage. *Thou ſhalt have no*
" *other Gods before me*, &c." Can any thing, if we except the concluding ſcene of human probation and the fate of angels, at the laſt day, be more tremendous than the uſhering in of this covenant? " And all the people ſaw the thunderings, and the
" lightnings, and the noiſe of the trumpet, and the
" mountain ſmoaking: and when the people ſaw it,
" they removed, and ſtood afar off. And they
" ſaid unto Moſes, Speak thou with us, and we
" *will hear*: but let not God ſpeak with us, leſt we
" die." And Moſes ſaid unto the people, " Fear
" not: for God is come to prove you, and that his
" fear may be before your faces, that ye ſin not."
Hence,

§ 25. This covenant contains, by implication, a rich exhibition of ſovereign *grace*; and expreſsly, the moſt tremendous diſplay of impartial *juſtice*: the former, to encourage obedience; the latter, to deter from ſin. What can be more graciouſly encouraging than theſe words? *I am the Lord thy God.* Or what better calculated, in connection with the whole ſolemnity, to impreſs them with a proper ſenſe of the divine majeſty and juſtice, than the following words? *God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye ſin not.*

§ 26. Majeſtic

§ 26. Majeſtic and venerable as this covenant was, the edifice was not intended to continue unremoved; but after a limited time to be taken down, not with violence, but with dignity and eaſe, by the ſame divine hand that erected it. "Behold "the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will make a "*new covenant* with the houſe of Iſrael and the "houſe of Judah: not according to the covenant "that I made with their fathers in the day that I "took them by the hand to bring them out of the "land of Egypt. In that he ſaith, *A new cove-* "*nant*, he hath made the firſt old. Now that "which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vaniſh "away." Seeing this covenant contained ſome things of moral and perpetual obligation, but the greater part was of a poſitive and variable nature; the former, on pulling down the building, was uſed in erecting the goſpel temple; the latter, became a heap of ruins, never to be employed any more. The edifice, as a whole, was demoliſhed; but the materials that were in their own nature durable and incapable of decay were adopted for a new purpoſe. For inſtance, did the Moſaic covenant or law (words often uſed ſynonymouſly) contain the duty of *loving* God and our neighbour? This duty was not laid aſide, as a duty, on the abolition of that covenant; it was not left to periſh with "beggarly elements" in one common heap of rubbiſh; but was preſerved and transferred to the *new* building, "the houſe of "the living God," which is never to be exchanged for another temporal diſpenſation; its nature is not altered,

altered, though the ſituation be new and more conſpicuouſly honourable. — Therefore,

§ 27. The Moſaic covenant or law was evidently of a *preparatory* nature. This is what St. Paul means, when he ſays, "*Before* faith came, we were "kept *under the law*, ſhut up unto the faith which "ſhould afterwards be revealed. Wherefore *the* "*law was our ſchoolmaſter* to bring us unto Chriſt, "that we might be juſtified by faith. But after "that faith is come, we are *no longer under a ſchool-*"*maſter*. For ye are all the children of God by "faith in Chriſt Jeſus." * By "*the law*" he means the *Moſaic* law or covenant, *as ſuch*; that building *as a whole*; and not thoſe preceptive parts of holy writ, whether the ten commandments or any other, which, as far as they go, are rules of rectitude. It is of conſiderable moment to obſerve, that in the New Teſtament where "the law" is mentioned, the *ten commands* excluſively are ſeldom or never intended; but moſt commonly the *whole code* of Moſaic law as a covenant, of which the decalogue was the *formula*, the baſis, or the conſtitution; and *always*, when any reference is had to its removal, its abolition, or diſannulling. If it is *impoſſible*, in the nature of things, that the rule of rectitude, and obligation of conformity to God, ſhould be *diſannulled* with reſpect to man, in any ſtate of his exiſtence, whether before or after the fall, before or after the goſpel, before or after believing, on earth, in heaven, or in hell; and if the ſcripture

* Gal. iii. 23—26.

ſcripture aſſerts that "after faith is come, we are "no longer under a *ſchoolmaſter*," that is, *the law*, as there explained; it follows irrefragably, that by the *law*, when the idea of abolition, removal, diſannulling, non-obligation, or the like, occurs, we are not to underſtand the ſtandard of moral rectitude, and obligation to obedience purely moral, but the *Moſaic law* or *covenant*, as ſuch.

§ 28. The *Goſpel*, according to Jeremiah and St. Paul, is called *a covenant* as well as the law. "But "*this ſhall be the covenant* that I will make with the "houſe of Iſrael; After thoſe days, ſaith the "Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, "and write it in their hearts. But now hath he "obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how much "alſo he is the Mediator of a *better covenant*. In "that he ſaith, *A new covenant*, he hath made the "firſt old." Though the *goſpel*, ſtrictly ſo called, is more properly termed a *teſtament* than a covenant; yet, ſeeing this teſtamentary grant muſt neceſſarily imply a requiſition of *acceptance* and correſponding *duties*, many of which duties are frequently ſpecified, and this enjoined ſometimes under pain of God's higheſt diſpleaſure, there is a propriety in calling the *whole* of the New Teſtament *a covenant*.— But this leads us to another head of diſcourſe.

§ 29. The diſtinguiſhing character of the *Goſpel* covenant, compared with the *law* covenant, and all former ones, may be compriſed under the following particulars. The goſpel, as to its *nature*, is the ſame with

with all the preceding exhibitions of grace and mercy to ſinful men; and differs only in the amplitude and clearneſs with which they are revealed. It contains the promiſes in maturity; their foundation, the Meſſiah, is clearly pointed out; and their ultimate tendency ſhewn in the light of open day. The promiſe to our firſt parents was the green blade, the goſpel, as revealed in the new teſtament, is the full corn in the ear. The former was the morning ſtar, the *latter* is the riſen ſun.

§ 30. The goſpel, in its proper nature, is eſſentially different from every law whatever. Every *law* is "a rule of action," but the goſpel is the *offer* or *promiſe of happineſs*. But as the offer is made to accountable beings, it is manifeſt that none can refuſe it and be innocent. This is beautifully illuſtrated by the parable of the great ſupper.* And as the goſpel contains an exhibitory grant of every deſireable good, and the fulleſt happineſs; hence ariſes more clear, more forcible, and more extenſive obligations on thoſe who live in the open day of the goſpel diſpenſation above all others.

§ 31. The chriſtian covenant is propoſed as attended with *no temporal* inducements, or penal ſanction; wherein it greatly differs from the Moſaic. The latter abounds with temporal promiſes, ſuch as of long life, a numerous offspring, plenty, and external peace; while the former directs almoſt the

* Luke xiv. 16—24.

whole of our expectations to a future ſtate, a kingdom of celeſtial glory. The one threatens all that is tremendous to human feelings in this life, the plague, the peſtilence, and famine; captivity and ſervitude, wars and devaſtations; to which we may add the puniſhments annexed to violations of certain precepts to be judicially inflicted on the tranſgreſſor: the other, refers the diſobedient to the ſufferings of an after ſtate, where the *fire is never quenched*, and their *worm never dieth*; where the unprofitable ſervant is confined to *outer darkneſs*; where all who obey not the goſpel are puniſhed with *everlaſting deſtruction*.

§ 32. The chriſtian covenant differs eſſentially from the legal, in that it has not only a mediator but alſo a *ſurety*. Moſes was a mediator in the inferior import of the term, but in no ſenſe was he a ſurety. Jeſus is not only "the *mediator* (μεσίτης) of a better covenant, which was eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes," but alſo "a *ſurety* (ἔγγυος) of a better teſtament." The mediation of Moſes was only ceremonial and typical; that of Jeſus Chriſt real and efficacious with reſpect to life and ſalvation, and our concerns with God as our moral governor. Not only would Moſes have acted the moſt preſumptuous part if he had undertaken to be the ſurety of the Iſraelites, as to their moral obedience and ſpiritual welfare; but, being their equal, he was naturally incapable of the office, and therefore could not have pretended to the uſe of it without the greateſt abſurdity. He, and he alone, is entitled to

to this truſt, the higheſt in all the univerſe, who can engage to GOD as the *equitable governor*, that "*all whom the Father gave him*" to ſave, ſhall be the happy recipients of the covenant, not only in its *external form* but alſo in its *internal grace*; who can make them *willing* in the day of his power, and *obedient* unto the end of their probationary ſtate; who can *quicken* whom he will, and be to them the perpetual ſource of life and happineſs; who can ſay with truth concerning thoſe for whom he engages, "they "hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow "me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they "ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them "out of my hands."

§ 33. The chriſtian covenant is, in a peculiar manner, *the miniſtration of the ſpirit*. Not only the ſubjects of divine influence are more numerous, but the degree of that influence is more abundant than in any prior period. "After thoſe days, ſaith the "Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, "and write it in their hearts;—and they ſhall teach "no more every man his neighbour, and every "man his brother, ſaying, *Know the Lord*, for they "ſhall all know me." Here it is clearly implied, not only that the means of *knowledge* ſhould be more general, but that the ſpirit ſhould be abundantly imparted to individuals under this diſpenſation. "This is that which was ſpoken by the prophet "Joel, And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days "ſaith GOD, *I will pour* out my ſpirit upon *all*

"*fleſh.*"* The *grant* of this invaluable bleſſing ſhall be extended to *Gentile ſinners*, as well as to Jewiſh people. Thus all who are baptized with water have the *promiſe* (underſtanding thereby a ſovereign gift, or *exhibitory* grant,) of being baptized by the holy ſpirit. And under this diſpenſation are, in fact, more frequent inſtances of *regenerating* grace; whereby every *divine law*, of ſtanding obligation, becomes as written on the heart, and reſides in the inward parts with an authoritative and lovely influence. The law of GOD and the inward man are in ſweet amity. Without regenerating, transforming influences, the perſon muſt be termed "a natural man," and his mind "a carnal mind," which is averſe to ſubjection to the law of GOD; but when he is "born "again," made "a new man," and "renewed in "the ſpirit of his mind," by the ſovereign agency of him who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, and which renewal no *means*, as ſuch, would ever effect, he begins to *delight* in the rectitude, purity, and perfection of the law. What we cannot hope to be equal to we may love and adore. To this we may add, in illuſtration of what GOD ſays, "I will put my law in their inward parts," that, on ſuppoſition of divine influence being *equal* in an Old Teſtament and a New Teſtament ſaint, this mode of ſpeaking may denote, that the excellency of the means, on ſimilar ſubjects, would be productive of ſuperior effect. But there is, moreover, great reaſon to conclude, that GOD's gracious power is exerted to a greater degree on individuals than

* Acts ii. 16, 17.

than in any former period; if we conſider the united teſtimonies of the prophets, John the Baptiſt, our Lord himſelf, and his apoſtles.

From this detail of the divine diſpenſations, I hope it appears, that, while *grace* lays the foundation, *equity* preſides over and ſecures the glory of the whole ſuperſtructure and each department.

SECT. IV.

Of the UNIVERSAL ASPECT of revelation.

§ 1. *We ſhould diſtinguiſh between the aſpect and the boundaries of revelation.* § 2. *All revelation from Adam to Noah had an univerſal aſpect.* § 3. *Alſo to Abraham and Moſes.* § 4. *The want of univerſality in the actual acquaintance of mankind with revealed truths, from Abraham to Meſſiah's advent, accounted for.* § 5. *The aſpect of the chriſtian revelation, univerſal.* § 6. *How to reconcile this with matter of fact.* § 7. *Corollary.*

§ 1. WE ſhould carefully obſerve the difference between the actual *boundaries* and the *aſpect* of revelation. The latter is univerſal in every period, at leaſt as to the moſt important parts of it; the former has been, in moſt ages, very partial. Thus light, air, water, natural liberty, are deſigned for the uſe of *all*, or the grant of them bears an univerſal aſpect, but the actual uſe is not ſo extenſive.

§ 2. Whatever divine revelation was made to Adam, Enoch, and Noah, it had undoubtedly an *univerſal aſpect*, there being no expreſs reſtriction of its promulgation and uſe to one more than another; nor any aſſignable reaſon exiſting for ſuch a reſtriction, though there is little doubt that the actual knowledge of the ſacred diſcovery was very unequal.

Through

Through careleſsneſs, worldly purſuits, and ſenſual gratifications, it is eaſy to conceive how many perſons, families, and even tribes or large neighbourhoods, would loſe the clearneſs of certain revealed truths, however intereſting and important, while they were no leſs intended by the exhibitory grants of ſovereign benefits than others who enjoyed advantages far ſuperior. The *aſpect* of the original promiſe, "that the Meſſiah ſhould bring deliver-"ance to men," was to Cain as well as Abel; to the daughters of men as well as the ſons of GOD; to Ham and Japheth as well as to Shem.

§ 3. *It may*, at firſt, be not ſo eaſy to apprehend, how what GOD revealed of his will to Abraham and Moſes had an aſpect ſo diffuſive and univerſal. But when we conſider that there is a wide difference between the *inſtruments* and the *objects* of covenant favours, the difficulty will vaniſh. Abraham and Sarah, Iſaac, Jacob, and his deſcendants to the time of the Meſſiah, were not only the *objects* but alſo the *inſtruments* of covenant bleſſings. While the Iſraelites alone (including proſelytes) were the honoured inſtruments of introducing the promiſed bleſſing; while it was ſaid to Abraham, "I will make thee "the father of many nations, and in Iſaac ſhall thy "ſeed be called;" it is evident from the encouragement given to proſelytes, and from the coincidence of the Abrahamic promiſe with the goſpel, that towards the *objects* of the covenant its aſpect was univerſal. Had any one of the human race ſtepped forward, and put in a claim of admiſſion in virtue

of the clauſe inſerted in the ſacred ſtatute in favour of proſelytiſm, the Jews had no right to diſpute that claim; which demonſtrates, that even the revelation which of all others is deemed the moſt reſtrictive, abſolutely excluded no man.

§ 4. It is not difficult to account for the want of *univerſality* in the *actual* acquaintance of mankind with revealed religion from the time of Abraham to the Meſſiah's advent. For,

1. Antient *predictions* of a Saviour were neceſſary in order to encourage and eſtabliſh the belief of ſinners from the beginning; which to an impartial mind muſt appear to be a truly amiable trait of moral government. And, in purſuance of the ſame end, the more ſpecific and particular theſe predictions were the more valuable they muſt be. But it is plain,

2. That the truth of theſe predictions could not be aſcertained, by identifying the perſon for the conviction of all the world, but by ſuch limitations and excluſive rites as were in fact enjoined upon the Iſraelites. By not mixing with other nations their genealogies were kept exact, whereby the predictions, the life and glory of which were derived from their ſpecific character, were eaſily traced; the evidence of his ſpringing from Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; the tribe of Judah, and family of David; the time of his coming, and the place of his nativity; muſt break forth with peculiar luſtre, and conſtitute no ſmall part of the evidence of Chriſtianity.

§ 5. The

§ 5. The univerſal aſpect of the chriſtian revelation is ſo plain on the face of the New Teſtament, that it would be needleſs to enter on a formal proof of the fact. Though John the Baptiſt was confined in his miniſtrations to the jewiſh nation, being commiſſioned to call them, as the ſubjects of the Moſaic covenant, and to whom primarily and moſt directly the promiſes were made as the deſcendants of Abraham, to the exerciſe of repentance and a thankful reception of the Meſſiah; and though our Lord himſelf, for ſimilar reaſons, came only to "his own," the "loſt ſheep of the houſe "of Iſrael," when he had finiſhed his redeeming work *he ſpeaks* a different language from what he had done before: 'And Jeſus came, and ſpake 'unto them, ſaying, "All power is given unto "me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore "and teach, or diſciple, ALL NATIONS;" or, as St. Mark expreſſes it, "Go ye into all the world, "and preach the goſpel to every creature." St. Peter, for a time, heſitated, with reſpect to the univerſality of this commiſſion, but he was, at length, ſufficiently convinced, that the goſpel looked upon *every* man, and made a gracious profer to him of life and ſalvation. "GOD hath ſhewed me "that I ſhould not call *any* man common or un-"clean."* Accordingly the apoſtles went forth in all directions, making no difference between Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt as Lord of all.

§ 6. If

* See Acts x. throughout.

§ 6. If it be enquired, How can we reconcile this univerſal aſpect, and orignal deſignation of the goſpel, with matter of fact? If it was *intended* for all nations, how comes it to paſs that ſo many nations are *actually* unacquainted with it? We reply; the partial manner in which the nations are evangelized is not owing to any *rectoral* reſtrictions, but to the *ſovereign* diſtributions and arrangements of *providence*. Nor can any one, who underſtands the goſpel commiſſion, and has it in his power (*cæt. par.*) to propagate it where it is not, remain unreproved in his own conſcience while hindering or not forwarding its more extenſive ſpread.

§ 7. *Coroll.* To be *unconcerned* about the ſpread of the goſpel among the heathen is truly *ſinful*. How can ſuch pray *Thy kingdom come*, without condemning themſelves by the very petition they utter? Since the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity God does not work miracles for its propagation, but leaves it to the ſame iſſue with other providential events; and this is an argument why we ſhould, with holy promptitude, improve every providential opportunity that offers to diffuſe the ſavour of Chriſt, and the ſalutary ſtreams of his goſpel. Have not opulent merchants, ſtateſmen, and ſovereigns, much to anſwer for on this account? The poor ſheep in the wilderneſs periſh for want of paſture and of ſhepherds, while millions are laviſhed on pleaſures and poſſeſſions that periſh in the uſing, and in the end involve their votaries in perdition, and fill them with the keeneſt remorſe. May Britiſh influence lie

lie no longer ſo criminally dormant! And when, at any time, miſſionaries are employed for this benevolent purpoſe, may they be men of GOD, whoſe hearts and lives are tranſcripts of the goſpel of peace! Then, *how beautiful upon the mountains* would be their feet, while moving from place to place to publiſh the glad tidings!

SECT.

SECT. V.

Of the RECTORAL INTENTION of the ſupreme Governor.

§ 1. We muſt diſtinguiſh between the rectoral and the decretive deſigns of God. § 2. This diſtinction eſſential to moral government. § 3. Further proved and illuſtrated. § 4. When both deſigns coincide in the ſame ſubject. § 5. This further explained. § 6. Corollary.

§ 1. WE muſt diſtinguiſh, with care, between the *rectoral* and the *decretive deſigns* of GOD; which diſtinction is not to be conſidered as arbitrary, to ſerve a turn, but as founded on the very nature of moral government. That GOD has *decretive* deſigns, with reſpect to the univerſe he hath made; the *hypothetical reſult* of the ſyſtem now exiſting being foreknown, beheld by the infinite intellect in the divine all-ſufficiency; and what otherwiſe could be but merely poſſible becoming by a ſettled purpoſe or decree certainly future; the proof of this, muſt be referred to another place. We now proceed to ſhew, that the *rectoral* intention is, and *neceſſarily muſt* be, *different* from the *decretive*.

§ 2. Without ſuch a *difference* of intention, moral government can have no exiſtence. The only way to know any *decretive* intention is from the *event*; whatever is found to be *fact*, as far as it could be the

the object of a decree, we are obliged to conclude that it was *decretively intended.* Since he is the efficient cauſe of all created *real entity*, it is folly to enquire, concerning ſuch an object, Whether GOD *purpoſed* its exiſtence or not; for it is ſelf-evident that without ſuch a *purpoſe* it could no more exiſt than it could be GOD. He as aſſuredly *decrees* what he effects, as that he is *wiſe*; therefore, to controvert the decretive deſign of any event, is the ſame as to queſtion, Whether GOD be wiſe or not. But his *rectoral* intention is to render all accountable beings *obedient* and *happy*. So far is the obedience and happineſs of men *intended*, in every diſpenſation of religion, that nothing whatever prevents it but their own *abuſed liberty*. When mercies are moſt freely and unreſervedly offered, or the moſt equitable laws enacted, and both as much calculated as poſſible to render the ſubject obedient and happy; man would not be a free agent, and conſequently would be no ſubject of moral government, if he had no power of fruſtrating the above mentioned rectoral intention. A *power of ſininng*, or of being diſobedient and conſequently unhappy, is eſſential to moral agency; without this, man could be no more accountable than a brute. But if ſo, who ſees not that the moſt unbounded benevolence, the moſt gracious promiſes, the wiſeſt laws, and the moſt engaging mercies, (when a ſuitableneſs of diſpoſition is not enſured by *ſovereign* grace, and which is by no means requiſite to conſtitute the equity of moral government) may be *fruſtrated*, as to their native tendency, and their rectoral deſign of making the ſubject obedient and happy?

§ 3. When

§ 3. When God convened the thouſands of Iſrael to the foot of mount Sinai, and with the majeſty of Godhead pronounced the ten commands, forbidding idolatry and other ſins, was it not his *legiſlative* and *rectoral intention* that the people to whom they were addreſſed, without exception, ſhould be *obedient* to thoſe laws, and, by a collateral uſe of the preceding promiſes, be *happy* in the compliance? He who can deliberately deny this, is beyond the reach of argument. But yet, what was the *event?* Did this benevolent *deſign* of the Lawgiver preſerve them, in fact, from idolatry, irreverence, ſabbath breaking, diſobedience to parents, murder, adultery, thieving, falſe witneſs, and covetouſneſs? Hiſtorical evidence decides to the contrary. The conſequence then is irrefragable, that the *rectoral* intention of making them obedient and happy *failed* of the end; it was counteracted and fruſtrated by abuſed free agency. But was God's *decretive* deſign therein counteracted and rendered void? This is the ſame as to aſk, Was the *event*, which is ever the infallible index of the decretive purpoſe, counteracted by any thing? From the very definition of a decree, the event can never claſh with it. But the legiſlative and rectoral deſign accord with the event, or not, as liberty is rightly uſed or elſe miſimproved.

§ 4. Then only do the decretive and rectoral intentions coincide in the ſubject, when he is actually conformed to the rule of government. When he uſes and improves his natural, powers, abilities and oppor-

opportunities to the divine glory; when he conforms to the rule of right announced to him; when he is ſuitably grateful and thankful in the enjoyment of bleſſings beſtowed on him; when he receives and improves exhibited favours; *then* he may be ſaid to be conformed to the rectoral intention. And when this is the real *event*, the ſubject's *happineſs* and the *decretive* deſign concerning him coincide.

§ 5. For the further explication of this ſubject it may be proper to remark:

1. The divine rectoral and decretive intentions, though *different*, are not *oppoſite*. When God gives to man a law with the *deſign* that it ſhould be obeyed, and the *event* is, that it is not obeyed; it by no means follows, that *diſobedience*, or the ſinfulneſs of the event, was the object of a decretive intention. The *ſinfulneſs* of a diſpoſition or action, having no efficient cauſe, cannot proceed from any poſitive act of God; and conſequently cannot be the object of any divine decree. It is, in fact, a negative idea, conſiſting in a *want* of moral good in a moral agent; which as really affects his happineſs as if it were of the moſt poſitive nature. The rectoral deſign is full of *benevolence*, which appears from the variety, ſuitableneſs, and wonderfully engaging nature of the *means* employed to promote the ſubject's happineſs; if the *event*, therefore, prove diſaſtrous to any, it is not from want of benevolence in the Governor, but ſinfulneſs in the creature, whereby his benevolent intention is counteracted. Nor can the diſaſtrous event be owing to the

the decretive intention, ſeeing the obliquity or ſinfulneſs of the event cannot poſſibly be any object of a decree, from what has been already ſaid; and unhappineſs, or poſitive ſuffering as a *penal* evil, is never attached to any thing ſhort of *moral* evil. It therefore neceſſarily follows, that theſe two intentions, the one aiming at the happineſs of *all* moral ſubjects, the other aiming at the happineſs of thoſe only who are *eventually* happy, though ſo *different* are not *oppoſite*.

2. Whenever the rectoral deſign is counteracted or fruſtrated, it is owing to the *ſinful defect* of the creature; and whenever the *event* is obedience and happineſs, it is owing to the *ſovereign influence* of GOD. This ariſes from a poſition too little known or conſidered, viz. "That the creature has power, "*of itſelf*, to fall ſhort of rectitude, but its power "of acting well is *wholly of God*," and which will claim particular notice in the ſequel of this Eſſay.

§ 6. *Coroll.* From the fundamental and neceſſary difference between the decretive and rectoral intention of GOD, while at the ſame time not oppoſite to each other, we infer the perfect conſiſtency of many paſſages of ſcripture with the divine decrees, though often urged as incompatible.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Of the OBLIGATIONS of men to receive the GOSPEL, and all the bleſſings it exhibits.

§ 1. The goſpel finds men ſinners. § 2. Yet is peculiarly adapted to certain characters. § 3, 4. Whence reſult obligations. § 5—7. Coroll. That God's rectoral intention was, that Chriſt be a Mediator to every ſinner whom the goſpel addreſſes, or may addreſs, with offers of pardon.

§ 1. THE goſpel of Chriſt finds all men *ſinners*, condemned and periſhing, helpleſs and hopeleſs; if therefore it addreſſes them at all, it muſt addreſs them *as ſuch*. To ſuppoſe the reverſe, is to ſuppoſe that there is ſome "other way given "among men whereby they may be ſaved" beſide the goſpel; and, that the rectoral deſign of GOD may be oppoſed with impunity. There is no previous *condition* required in us to *qualify* us for a ſhare in the promiſe of mercy; ſince the evangelical promiſe is an *abſolute grant* to the unworthy, the needy, and the ruined.* It denotes "good

* The following words of the amiable Mr. HERVEY ſo fully expreſſing my ideas of the ſubject under conſideration, I ſhall make no further apology for their inſertion in this place. "Nothing "is required in order to our participation of Chriſt and his bene-
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" tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to *all people*;" not to all *good* people excluſively. The goſpel is a ſalutary ſtream that iſſues from under the throne of God's high ſovereignty, diffuſing itſelf wider and wider,

" fits, but only that we *receive them*. Receive them, as the freeſt " of gifts, or as matter of mere grace, vouchſafed to the moſt " unworthy. Is it not neceſſary that we have, at leaſt, a convic- " tion of our need of theſe benefits, and a ſenſe of their unſpeak- " able worth? Not as the condition of our enjoying them. The " proper buſineſs of ſuch convictions is only to act as *ſtimulatives*; " exciting us earneſtly to covet, gladly to receive, the unſpeakably " needful gifts." *Theron* and *Aſpaſio*. vol. III. p. 310. Lond. 1789.

" In this parable, [Matt. xxii. 11.] Chriſt is both the bride- " groom, the feaſt, and the wedding-garment. And *who* are in- " vited to an union with this Bridegroom? To be gueſts at this " feaſt? To be arrrayed with this wedding-garment? — The " meſſengers are ſent, not to the manſion-houſes of the rich, or " the palaces of the mighty; but to the *highways and hedges*. — " *To whom* is their meſſage addreſſed? Not to the amiable or " accompliſhed. But to the *poor*, the *maimed*, the *halt*, the *blind*. (Luke xiv. 21.) Perſons, who have no recommending endow- " ments, but even *lotheſome* and *diſguſtful* property. Yet theſe " (mark the paſſage, my Friend; mark well the encouraging cir- " cumſtance) *theſe* are not only allowed, but intreated — impor- " tuned — and, by all the arts of perſuaſion, by every weighty or " winning motive, *compelled to come in*. — After all this, ſurely, it " cannot be an act of preſumption to accept, but muſt be a breach " of duty to refuſe the invitation." *Ibid.* p. 311.

" *I have prepared my dinner*, ſays the King eternal. All things " are ready. (Matt. xxii. 4.) Whatever is neceſſary for the juſti- " fication, the holineſs, the complete ſalvation of ſinners, is pro- " vided in the merit and the grace of my Son. Let them come " therefore, as to a nuptial banquet; and freely enjoy my muni- " ficence; and feaſt their ſouls with the royal proviſion. — Let " us imitate the returning prodigal. He came, with no recom-

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wider, till at length it cover the whole earth as the "waters do the ſea." Its progreſs, however, is directed with an awful mixture of ſovereignty and

H 2 equity.

"mendation, either of dreſs, of perſon, or of character. None "but his nakedneſs, his miſery, and an acknowledgment of vile- "neſs, which had every aggravating, not one extenuating circum- "ſtance. Yet he was received — received with indulgence — "received with careſſes — and, without ſtaying to provide any "handſome apparel of his own, was clothed with the *beſt robe*, "the robe of a Saviour's righteouſneſs." *Ibid.* p. 312.

"When the Almighty made man, and placed him in this habit- "able world, did he ſay? "Here is a dwelling-place, furniſh "yourſelves with accommodations. Here are materials, let your "own ſkill form the trees, the fruits, the grain."—Or did he ſay? "Here they are, ready formed to your hand; only do ſomething, "in order to qualify yourſelves for them, or entitle yourſelves to "them." No; his language was; "They are fully prepared. "You are welcome to make uſe of them all. They are my free "gift to my needy creatures." In like manner when he ſent his "Son into the world, to make the atonement for ſin, and to work "the juſtifying righteouſneſs, he ſaid not to fallen man; "Do "your part in this grand buſineſs. At leaſt make yourſelf, in "ſome degree, meet for theſe benefits."— No; but he ſpoke, or "rather now ſpeaks in the goſpel, to this effect: "The work is all "done; with a perfection that is abſolute, and admits of no addi- "tion. The benefits are, not to diſtinguiſh merit, but to recover "the ruined. Therefore, as ruined, undeſerving, guilty creatures, "you are welcome to apply and enjoy them all." *Ibid.* p. 314.

"The ſacred word deſcribes the Goſpel, as a *Will* or *Teſtament*. "(Heb. ix. 16, 17.) This notion not only runs through the "ſcriptures, but ſtands conſpicuous even in their title page. — "What are they called? THE OLD and THE NEW TESTA- "MENT. — What is a teſtament? An authentic deed, in which "eſtates are tranſmitted, and legacies bequeathed. In other "teſtaments, ſome *earthly* poſſeſſion; in this, the *heavenly* patri- "mony, even all the riches of grace, and the everlaſting inherit-

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equity. In that it flows to one part, and not to another, in any given time, how *ſovereign!* In that it has no reſpect of perſons, making no difference in its offers between external rank, or degrees of pretended merit, how *equitable!*

§ 2. Yet we muſt ſay that its contents are peculiarly adapted to certain diſpoſitions and circumſtances. Are any made ſenſible of their ſpiritual ſickneſs? how ſeaſonable the information that Chriſt is a phyſician. Are any burdened and heavy laden? Jeſus promiſes freedom from the toil. Are any poor in ſpirit? the riches of grace and heaven are opened for their uſe. Do they hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs? with righteouſneſs and glory they ſhall be filled. Do they mourn over their own ſins and thoſe of others, the diſhonour done to GOD, and the conſequent miſeries of ſinners? the Saviour declares that they ſhall be comforted. In ſhort, the goſpel propoſes to every ſoul of man, invaluable bleſſings ſuited to *every ſtate* without exception. It brings its righteouſneſs near to "the "ſtout-hearted who are far from righteouſneſs." And yet the fact is, that none will receive it but ſuch as are convinced of their need of it. He who is made rich is firſt made poor. He who is ſatisfied is

"ance of glory. Did we conſider the ſcriptures in this light, it "would be a moſt engaging invitation, to ſearch them with "affiduity and pleaſure. What child is willing to continue "ignorant of a deceaſed parent's laſt will and teſtament? Who "does not covet to know, what honours, hereditaments, and "wealth devolve to his enjoyment, by ſuch an intereſting and "honourable conveyance?" *Ibid.* p. 315.

is firſt made to hunger and thirſt. He who enters in at the ſtrait gate is firſt made to ſtrive for an entrance. He who enjoys eternal reſt and ſalvation, is firſt found a penitent, a believer, obedient and perſevering.

§ 3. Obligations reſult from the mere *exhibition* of bleſſings, as moral *means* held forth by the ſupreme governor; and not *only* when bleſſings are actually poſſeſſed. Moral means are the grand medium whereby GOD governs his accountable creatures. His rectoral intention in giving them is, that we may be obedient and happy in the right uſe of them. To the benighted there is light; to the guilty, pardon; to the weak, ſtrength; to enemies, reconciliation; to the ſorrowful, comfort; to the needy, heavenly riches. If theſe things are proclaimed for our conſtant uſe, as they evidently are, we are under *obligation* to receive them according as they ſuit our caſe. And this obligation is augmented from expreſs *commands:* to *repent*, that our ſins may be blotted out; to *awake* from the ſleep of ſin, that Chriſt may give us light; to *believe* on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that we may be ſaved; to *run* that we may obtain the heavenly prize. And we may add, that this obligation is heightened from the awful *threatenings* attending a refuſal: thoſe who refuſe the invitation to the great ſupper, ſhall not taſte of it; thoſe who continue impenitent ſhall periſh; thoſe who perſiſt in unbelief ſhall be damned; and thoſe who obey not the goſpel ſhall be

puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

§ 4. It appears to me, I own, not a little ſurpriſing, that any intelligent perſon, who believes the New Teſtament to be the expreſſion of the divine will, ſhould ſcruple to own, that Jeſus Chriſt and all his benefits are there propoſed or *offered* to the acceptance of men *as ſinners.* Is the goſpel the primary inſtrument in converſion, or is it not? If it is, can it addreſs men in any *other* character than as periſhing ſinners? And if they are addreſſed in that character, is it not their *duty*, are they not ſtrictly *obliged*, while poſſeſſing ſuch a character, to accept of the heavenly donation? The negative of this queſtion is confronted by every principle of moral obligation. On the contrary, the rejection of Chriſt and his proffered ſalvation, ranks with crimes of higheſt aggravation and deepeſt guilt. He who *rejects* GOD's *teſtimony*, *makes him a liar.* And this is the *record*; "that GOD hath given to "us eternal life; and this life is in his ſon."* If Chriſt is preached at all to men, they are under indiſſoluble obligations to believe on him.

§ 5. *Coroll.* That there might be a ſuitable, reaſonable and conſiſtent ground of believing in Chriſt for ſalvation, we muſt infer, that GOD's *rectoral intention* was, that Chriſt be a Mediator for *every ſinner* whom the goſpel addreſſes. I am apprehenſive that the chief reaſon why ſome have contended againſt the *free offers* of Chriſt and ſalvation to *ſinners* have been a dread

* See 1 John v. 9—13.

a dread of the neceſſary *conſequence* of that doctrine, which is expreſſed in the corollary. But is it a conſequence to be dreaded by any lover of truth? Far from it. For it by no means militates againſt the honours of ſovereign grace, or a *decretive ſpeciality* in his mediation. The ſcripture aſſerts, "that "he died *for all*;" to anſwer *Arminian* objections advanced from ſuch a paſſage, by ſaying that it means "*all the elect*," "*ſome of all ſorts*," "*Gentiles* "*as well as Jews*," or the like, appears to me by no means fair and ſatisfactory.* But when we ſay,

* "But you will ſay, all theſe general expreſſions do but denote, "*genera ſingulorum*, ſome of all ſorts, the world of the elect, or "the all of believers. In anſwer to which I ſhall only put two "queries.

"1. If thoſe general expreſſions denote only the world of the "elect, or the all of believers, why is it not ſaid in ſcripture that "GOD *elected* all and every man, the world, and the whole world? "in that ſenſe it is as true that GOD elected them all, as it is that "Chriſt died for them all. Why then doth the Holy Spirit altogether forbear thoſe general expreſſions in the matter of *election*, "which it uſeth in the matter of *redemption*? Surely it imports "thus much unto us, that redemption hath a larger ſphere than "election; and therefore the ſcriptures contract election in words "of ſpeciality only, whilſt they open and dilate redemption in "emphatical generalities.

"2. If thoſe general expreſſions denote only the world of the "elect or the all of believers, why doth the ſcripture uſe ſuch "very different language in the ſame thing? Sometimes Chriſt is "called *the Saviour of the* WORLD, and ſometimes *the Saviour of* "*the* BODY; ſometimes it is ſaid that Chriſt *died* or *gave himſelf* "*for* ALL, or *for the* WORLD, and ſometimes it is ſaid that he gave "himſelf *for the* CHURCH or *for his* SHEEP. Who can imagine "that ſuch words of univerſality, and ſuch words of ſpeciality "ſhould be of the ſame latitude? that one and the ſame thing

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that the *rectoral* deſign of the death of Chriſt extends to *all men* without exception, in the ſame manner as the original and after promiſes, and innumerable bleſſings that perpetually flow from the Father of lights, are extended to them, and for their uſe, it at once does juſtice to the language of ſcripture, which is frequently univerſal, while it ſtands perfectly conſiſtent with every *decretive* deſignation of it.

§ 6. The *extent* of the *goſpel offer*, or ſovereign grant of mercy; and that of the *rectoral deſign of Chriſt's death*, muſt ſtand or fall together. If in the goſpel miniſtry *reconciliation* is held forth to any who are not and will not be reconciled; if GOD is, *in Chriſt*, making a propoſal of reconciling the *world* unto himſelf not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them; it follows, that the death of Chriſt has the extent above-mentioned in the plan of divine government. If reconciliation to GOD is *propoſed* to the world of ſinners, as it certainly is in the miniſtry of the goſpel, there muſt be a *rational* and *true*, not a fallacious and

" ſhould be imported in both? Moreover, the ſcripture doth make a " ſignal diſtinction; when it ſpeaks of his giving himſelf for his " *church*, it ſays that he ſanctified himſelf that *it might be ſanctified* " through the truth, John xvii. 19. And that he gave himſelf " for it, *that he might purify to himſelf a peculiar people*, Tit. ii. 14. " and that he gave himſelf for it, *that he might ſanctify and cleanſe* " *it by the word, and preſent to himſelf a glorious church, without* " *ſpot or wrinkle*, Eph. v. 25 — 27. Never in all the ſcripture " is it ſaid that he gave himſelf for *all*, or for the *world*, that he " might ſanctify or cleanſe it, or make it a peculiar people, or " glorious church, which yet might have been truly ſaid, if the all " were no more than the all of believers; or the world, than the " world of elect." POLHILL, on the *Divine Will*, p. 296.

and deluſive, *ground* of reconciliation. And can that be any thing ſhort of the death of Chriſt? If the goſpel calls to its great ſupper, "the poor and "the maimed, the halt and the blind;" if it invites many who "pray to be excuſed," and never come; the proviſion muſt have been *deſigned* for them; as much deſigned as a dinner is for one invited to it who ſends a meſſage that "he cannot come."

§ 7. The *mediatorſhip*, atonement, and merits of Chriſt, are the foundation of all goſpel offers; and the *rectoral* deſignation of them extends to all human characters on earth: but the *ſuretyſhip* of Chriſt, the exertion of his power, and the application of his grace, is the foundation of juſtification, regeneration, ſanctification, and perſeverance; and the *decretive* deſignation of them extends only to perſons who eventually love God and enjoy heaven; the *choſen*, the *called*, the *faithful*. Every new-covenant bleſſing flows through the mediation and merits of Chriſt; when therefore overtures of pardon and reconciliation, righteouſneſs and peace, are made to *ſinners* as ſuch, and not merely to elect ſinners, can the conſequence be avoided, that theſe bleſſings, purchaſed by the death of Chriſt, are rectorally deſigned for them? Muſt not the *proviſion* be equally extenſive with the *overture?* Is the propoſal made, *deluſive* or *real?* If the latter, muſt not the advantages propoſed be the purchaſe of the mediator? Or is the overture made founded on the foreſeen *averſion* of the ſinner to the thing propoſed, and the *certainty* of a refuſal if left in the hand of his own counſel?

counſel? And then the propoſal would be hypothetical; thus: If you perform, what it is *certain* you will not, you ſhall be ſaved. That is, if you believe a falſhood, that there is proviſion made for ſinners, *as ſuch*, when, on the ſuppoſition, there is proviſion only for *elect* ſinners, which election cannot be known as a qualification for believing, GOD is willing to beſtow pardon! But is ſuch a propoſal worthy of the great Supreme, or better than *deluſive?* — We conclude, therefore, that the *rectoral* deſign of the death of Chriſt (whatever higher ſpeciality there is in it) extends to all the *human race*; * not

* That illuſtrious reformer and admirable writer, CALVIN, has treated much of predeſtination and the doctrines of ſpecial grace; but though his works conſiſt of *nine* volumes *folio*, I do not think that there is one ſentence in them all that militates againſt the above repreſentation; and in many places he expreſſes himſelf in a manner that abundantly juſtifies it, particularly his comments on ſeveral paſſages of the New Teſtament. To inſtance only the following: "Matt. xxvi. 8. Sub multorum nomine *non partem* mundi "tantum deſignat, ſed *totum humanum genus*. — Rom. v. 18. *Etſi* "*paſſus eſt* Chriſtus pro peccatis *totius mundi*, atque *omnibus* indif- "ferenter Dei benignitate offertur, non tamen apprehendunt."

The great Mr. CHARNOCK, who for depth of penetration and accuracy of judgment was equalled by few, expreſſes himſelf, in his *Diſcourſe of the acceptableneſs of Chriſt's death*, thus: "'Tis "ſufficient for the ſalvation of all ſinners, and the expiation of "all ſins. The wrath of GOD was ſo fully *appeaſed* by it, his "juſtice ſo fully *ſatisfied*, that there is *no bar* to a re-admiſſion "into his favour, and the enjoyment of the privileges purchaſed "by it, *but man's unbelief*. The blood of Chriſt is a ſtream, "whereof *all men* may drink; an ocean, wherein *all men* may "bathe. It wants not value to remove our ſins, if we want not "faith to embrace and plead it. — 'Tis abſolutely ſufficient in itſelf, "ſo

not merely to thoſe who have been, or actually ſhall be, but alſo ſuch as *may* be evangelized or diſcipled — that is, *all the nations*, paſt, preſent, and future; and with St. John we may affirm, without either

"ſo that if every ſon of Adam, from Adam himſelf to the laſt man "that ſhall iſſue from him by natural deſcent ſhould by faith ſue out "the benefit of it, *it would be conferred upon them.* — If any "periſhed by the biting of the fiery ſerpent, it was not for want "of a remedy in *God's Inſtitution*, but from wilfulneſs in themſelves. The antitype anſwers to the type, and wants no more "a ſufficiency to procure a ſpiritual good, than that to effect the "cure of the body. He is therefore called *the Saviour of the "World*, 1 John iv. 14. — When the apoſtle ſaith, (Rom. x. 9.) "*If* thou *ſhalt* confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and "believe with thy heart, *thou ſhalt be ſaved*; he ſpeaks to *every "man* that ſhall hear that ſentence. If any man believe, this "ſacrifice is ſufficient for his ſalvation. — If all men in the world "were united to him by faith, there could not be any more "required of Chriſt for their ſalvation than what he hath already "acted; for it is a ſacrifice of infinite value, and *infinite* knows "no limits. Since it was ſufficient to ſatisfy an infinite juſtice, "'tis ſufficient to ſave an inexpreſſible number, and the virtue "of it in ſaving *one*, argues a virtue in it to ſave *all* upon the "ſame condition. — If men therefore periſh, 'tis not for want of "value, or virtue, or acceptableneſs in this ſacrifice, but for want of "anſwering the terms upon which the enjoyment of the benefits "of it is propoſed. If a man will ſhut his eyes againſt the light "of the ſun, it argues an obſtinacy in the perſon, not any defect "in the ſun itſelf." CHARNOCK'S *Works*, Vol. II. p. 564. Lond. 1699. His admirable *Diſcourſe on Reconciliation* is full of the ſame ſentiment, of which I ſhall ſubjoin only a few ſpecimens. "The world is fundamentally reconciled; there being a foundation laid for the world to be at peace with GOD, if they accept of "the terms upon which this amity is to be obtained." *Ibid.* 170. "Iſa. liii. 6. *The Lord hath laid upon him*, &c. He gathered "together the debts of man, put them into one ſum, and transferred them upon Chriſt, as to guilt and puniſhment." *Ibid.* 212.

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either trembling for the cauſe of orthodoxy, or throwing duſt in the eyes of its enemies by far-fetched criticiſms: "He is the propitiation for our "ſins; and not for ours only, but alſo for the "ſins

"The intreaty and arguments uſed to perſuade men to the accept-"ance of it, could have no validity without this foundation, that "a reconciliation is wrought, and the expiatory ſufferings of "Chriſt accepted by GOD." *Ibid.* 219.

I ſhall here ſubjoin ſome extracts from a writer, who, though a layman, poſſeſſed abilities and acquirements of the firſt rank, with a ſublime ſpirit of devotion; this author is EDWARD POLHILL, Eſq. The ſentiment of the text, corroborated by CALVIN and CHARNOCK, this acute writer defends in the following manner.

"*I argue from the will of God.* GOD's will of ſalvation as the "*fontal* cauſe thereof, and Chriſt's death as the *meritorious* cauſe "thereof, are of equal latitude. GOD's will of ſalvation doth not "extend beyond Chriſt's death; for then he ſhould intend to ſave "ſome *extra Chriſtum*; neither doth Chriſt's death extend beyond "GOD's will of ſalvation, for then he ſhould die for ſome whom "GOD would upon no terms ſave; but theſe two are exactly "co-extenſive. Hence it is obſervable, that when the apoſtle "ſpeaks of Chriſt's love to the *church*, he ſpeaks alſo of his *giving* "*himſelf for* IT, EPH. v. 25. and when he ſaith GOD *will have* "ALL MEN *to be ſaved*, 1 TIM. ii. 4. he ſaith withal, Chriſt "*gave himſelf a ranſom for* ALL, ver. 6.

"*I argue from the covenant of grace, and the promiſes comprized* "*therein.*—If Chriſt did no way die for all men, which way "ſhall the truth of theſe general promiſes be made out? *Who-*"*ſoever will may take of the water of life.* What, though Chriſt "never bought it for him? *Whoſoever believes ſhall be ſaved.* "What, though there were no λύτρον, no price paid for him? "Surely the goſpel knows no water of life but which Chriſt pur-"chaſed, nor way of ſalvation but by a λύτρον, a price paid.— "If Chriſt's death (though of immenſe value) had been paid for "none, it had been no price at all; and if it were paid but for

"ſome

"ſins of the *whole world.*" * And with St. Paul: "We thus judge, that if one *died for all* then were "all dead; and (we further judge) *that he died* "*for all,*" with the ſame rectoral intention by which

"ſome, it was no price for the reſt, for whom it was not paid. "Theſe things premiſed, if Chriſt *no way* died for *all* men, how "can thoſe promiſes ſtand *true*? All men, if they believe, ſhall "be ſaved; ſaved, but how? Shall they be ſaved by a λύτρον, or "price of redemption? there was none at all paid for them; the "*immenſe value* of Chriſt's death doth not make it a *price* as to "them for whom he died not; or ſhall they be ſaved without "a λύτρον, or price? GOD's unſatisfied juſtice cannot ſuffer it, his "minatory law cannot bear it, neither doth the goſpel know any "ſuch way of ſalvation; take it either way, the *truth* of thoſe "promiſes cannot be vindicated, unleſs we ſay, that Chriſt died "for *all* men. — If it be yet further demanded, to what purpoſe "is it to argue which way reprobates ſhall be ſaved, ſeeing none "of them ever did or will believe? Let the apoſtle anſwer, "*What if ſome did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith* "*of God of none effect? God forbid*; *yea, let God be true, but every* "*man a liar*, ROM. iii. 3, 4. And again, *If we believe not, yet* "*he abideth faithful, and cannot deny himſelf*, 2 TIM. ii. 13. No "reprobate ever did or will believe, yet the promiſe muſt be "*true*, and true *antecedently* to the faith or unbelief of men; true, "becauſe it is the promiſe of GOD, and antecedently true, becauſe "elſe it could not be the object of faith."

"*I argue from the miniſter's commiſſion*, which is, Go preach "the goſpel to every creature. By virtue of this, they command "all men every where to repent; and to induce them there- "unto, they open a door of hope to them, and to raiſe up "that hope, they ſet forth Jeſus Chriſt evidently before their "eyes, as if he were crucified among them. — In all their "pathetical beſeechings, *God himſelf beſeeches*, 2 COR. v. 28. in "all their loud out-cries, Wiſdom herſelf *cries out*, PROV. viii. "1, 4. in all their earneſt expoſtulations, Chriſt himſelf ſtands at "the door and knocks, REV. iii. 20. — But if Chriſt no way "died

* 1 John ii. 2.

which he gives his promiſes and *himſelf* to all, to the end that they may have the *means* of being obedient and happy; and with the higher and more ſpecific end, "that they who live (as juſtified by ſovereign

"died for all men, how came the miniſter's commiſſion to be ſo "large? They command men to repent that their ſins may be "blotted out, but how can their ſins be blotted out for whom "Chriſt was not *made ſin?* — Why ſhould they come to that "feaſt for whom nothing is prepared? How ſhould they eat and "drink for whom the lamb was never ſlain?

"*I argue from the unbelief of men, which is wonderfully aggravated* "*in Scripture.* Through Jeſus Chriſt there is a real offer of "grace made, but unbelief *receives it in vain*, 2 COR. vi. 1. "Great ſalvation is prepared, but unbelief *neglects it*, HEB. ii. 3. "Eternal reſt is promiſed, but unbelief *comes ſhort of it*, HEB. "iv. 1. The kingdom of heaven comes nigh to men, but unbe- "lief *draws back from it*, HEB. x. 39. GOD himſelf bears "witneſs that there is life in his Son, even for all if they believe, "but unbelief ſaith *No* to it, and doth what it can *to make him* "*a liar*, 1 JOHN v. 10.—How can thoſe men receive grace in "vain, for whom it was never procured? or neglect ſalvation, "for whom it was never prepared? How can they fall ſhort of "eternal reſt, for whom it was never purchaſed? or draw back "from the kingdom of heaven which never approached unto "them? How can there be life in Chriſt for thoſe for whom he "never died? and if not, which way doth their unbelief give "GOD the lie?" POLHILL on the *Divine Will* conſidered in its *Eternal Decrees*, and holy execution of them, p. 282 *et ſeq.*

There are ſome things, even on the ſubject of *redemption*, in which I do not fully accord with this author; "but where there "is an agreement in the ſubſtance and deſign of any doctrine," (to borrow the words of Dr. OWEN, in his recommendatory preface to the above Treatiſe) "as there is between my judgment and "what is here ſolidly declared, it is our duty to bear with each "other in things *circumſtantial*, or *different explanations of the* "*ſame truth*, when there is no incurſion made upon the main "principles

" ſovereign grace, and made alive by virtue derived " from Chriſt) ſhould not henceforth live unto " themſelves, but unto him who died for them " and roſe again." * Thus, in a word, Jeſus Chriſt is, in the plan of DIVINE GOVERNMENT, the appointed and intended *Saviour of all men*, but, *eſpecially*, with a decretive infallible ſpeciality, *of thoſe that*, through gracious influence, *believe*.† " There " is one mediator between GOD and men, the man " Chriſt Jeſus, who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, " to be teſtified in due time." ‡

SECT.

" principles we own." What the Doctor immediately adds, is no *ſmall* recommendation of the work as to its *general* merit: " The *argumentative* part of this book is generally ſuited unto the " genius of the age paſt, wherein *accuracy and ſtrictneſs of reaſon* " *bare away*."

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. † 1 Tim iv. 10. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

SECT. VII.

Of the rule and proceſs of final JUDGMENT.

§ 1. *A final judgment aſſerted in ſcripture.* § 2. *The immediate ſubject of this ſection.* § 3. *The rule of final judgment, what.* § 4. *What the proper* object *of judgment.* § 5, 6. *The intereſt of equity and ſovereignty therein.* § 7. *The acquittance and remuneration of the bleſſed ſtand on equitable grounds.* § 8. *The effects and conſequences of judgment.* § 9 — 12. *Remarks on univerſal reſtoration.* § 13 — 17. *Objections of the defenders of univerſal reſtoration anſwered.*

§ 1. GOD *ſhall bring every work into judgment,* ſaith Solomon, *with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.** *And Jeſus commanded us to preach unto the people,* ſays Peter, *and to teſtify that it was he which was ordained of God, to be the judge of quick and dead.*† — *Behold the Lord cometh with ten thouſands of his ſaints,* ſays Jude, *to execute judgment upon all.*‡ *We ſhall all ſtand,* ſaith Paul, *before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt.*§ "I beheld," ſays Daniel, "till the thrones were caſt down (all "terreſtrial kingdoms aboliſhed) and the ancient "of days did ſit, whoſe garment was white as ſnow, "and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his "throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning

* Eccles. xii. 14. † Acts x. 42.
‡ Jude 14, 15. § Rom. xiv. 10.

" fire. A fiery ſtream iſſued and came forth from " before him; thouſand thouſands miniſtered " unto him; the judgement was ſet and the books " were opened. —And at that time ſhall Michael " ſtand up, the great prince which ſtandeth for the " children of thy people; and there ſhall be a " time of trouble ſuch as never was ſince there " was a nation even to that ſame time, and at that " time thy people ſhall be delivered, every one that " ſhall be found written in the book. And many " of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth " ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome " to ſhame and everlaſting contempt. And they " that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the " firmament; and they that turn many to righte- " ouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever." * Who *the ancient of days* is we learn from St. John, (Rev. i. 13 — 16. xx. 11 — 15.) and from truth itſelf, (Matt. xxv. 31 — 46.)

§ 2. From theſe paſſages of inſpiration, nothing can be plainer than the appointment of a *judgment to come*; but the immediate buſineſs of this ſection is not to ſhew who are the *perſons judged*, and who is *the judge*; nor is it neceſſary here to enter on a formal proof of the ſecond perſonal coming of Chriſt, and the certainty of a final general judgment at the day of reſurrection; † what chiefly

* Dan. vii. 9, 10. xii. 1—3.

† Some of my readers know that there has lately appeared a *theological phenomenon* (not to ſay *comet* or *meteor*) in the religious world, portending that there is no *ſecond coming* of our Lord, no *laſt*

demands our preſent attention is to inquire — what is the *rule* of final judgment — what is the proper *object* of it — what the reſpective influence of *equity* and *ſovereignty* in the whole proceſs — and what the *effect* of all?

§ 3. The

laſt judgment, no *reſurrection*, in the ſenſe they have been always underſtood by the chriſtian church. The foundation of theſe tenets, and moſt of the peculiar doctrines of the *New Jeruſalem Church*, eſtabliſhed by Baron SWEDENBORG, is what they term the *Science of Correſpondences*. This once admitted as an inviolable part of their creed, the particulars juſt mentioned, with ſome other points of leſs notoriety, ſeem to follow of courſe. We ſhall therefore, firſt, look at the foundation and main pillars of this *luminous caſtle*, from whence the remaining parts of the ſtructure may be eſtimated; and, then, ſubjoin a few remarks.

1. The *Science of Correſpondences*. "Correſpondence in gene-
"ral may be defined, the relation ſubſiſting between the eſſence
"of a thing and its form, or between the cauſe and its effect:
"thus the whole natural world correſponds to the ſpiritual world;
"the body of a man, with all its parts, correſponds to his ſoul;
"and the literal ſenſe of the word correſponds to the ſpiritual
"ſenſe. So that wherever there is a correſpondence, there is
"neceſſarily implied ſuch an *union* between two things, as only
"takes place when the one is derived from the other, in the ſame
"manner as an effect is derived from its efficient cauſe, or as
"ſpeech is derived from thought, and the geſtures of the body
"from the affections of the mind; in all which caſes the exterior
"forms can no more be ſeparated from the interior eſſences,
"without loſing their exiſtence, than the body of a man can be
"ſeparated from his ſoul without death. Such is the nature
"and power of *correſpondences*." Mr. HINDMARSH's Letters to Dr. PRIESTLEY, p. 281. "The *ſcience of correſpondences* is now
"diſcovered, which is the only true key that can unlock the
"cabinet of the literal ſenſe of ſcripture, within which are con-
"tained the jewels of its ſpiritual and celeſtial ſenſe. The great
"diverſity of opinions reſpecting the letter, of which you are
"ſufficiently

§ 3. The *rule* of final judgment can be no other than *that* of moral government, called the *moral law*; the *immediate foundation* of which lies in conſtituted relations. Hence it is plain, that obligations

 vary

" ſufficiently apprized, is in a great meaſure owing to the want " of ſuch a key; for the more we are acquainted with the ſcience " of correſpondences, ſo much the more ſhall we be agreed in " judgment, and in the true underſtanding of the ſcriptures. " Indeed ſo regular and certain is that ſcience, that were any " given number of perſons, properly acquainted with it, required " to give their opinion of any part of ſcripture, they would all " uniformly agree in the ſame explanation, if not in words, yet " in ſubſtance; which is a circumſtance not even pretended to " by thoſe who reject the ſpiritual ſenſe, but at the ſame time a " ſtriking proof of the reality of correſpondences, and that the " Word of GOD is written according to that ſcience." *Ibid.* 268. " It only requires a proper knowledge of the ſcience of correſ- " pondences, to be poſſeſſed of a rational, ſatisfactory, and " determinate way of explaining them. For example, wherever " mention is made of a *horſe*, it invariably ſignifies the *under-* " *ſtanding*; and a *chariot* means *doctrine*." *Ibid.* 273. " A mere " figure or ſimile is the reſemblance which one *natural* object or " circumſtance is ſuppoſed to bear to another *natural* object or " circumſtance; whereas a correſpondence is the actual relation " ſubſiſting between a *natural* object and a *ſpiritual* ſubject, or a " *natural* form and a *ſpiritual* eſſence; that is between *outer* and " *inner*, *lower* and *higher*, *nature* and *ſpirit*; and not between " *nature* and *nature*, or *ſpirit* and *ſpirit*. This diſtinction ſhould " be well attended to. The language of correſpondence is " the language of GOD himſelf, being that which he always " ſpeaks, both in his word, and in his works: but figure and " metaphor, together with the language of fable, are the mere " inventions of man, which took their riſe when the divine ſcience " of correſpondences began to be loſt in the world." *Ibid.* 283.

" Numbers, as well as names, in the holy word, are ſignificative " and correſpondent; therefore it is ſaid, Apoc. xiii. 18. *Here*

is

vary as relations and circumſtances do. And it is no leſs plain, that moral *obligation*, the moral *law*, and conſtituted *relations*, are co-exiſtent; there is no obligation

" *is wiſdom, let him that hath underſtanding count the number of the* " *beaſt: for it is the number of a man; and his number is ſix hundred* " *three ſcore and ſix.* — I remember to have read, ſome years ago, " many curious explanations of the number 666, all having refer- " ence to the titles of the Pope, in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, or in " ſome other way alluding to the church of Rome. The words " *Lateinos, Romiith, Vicarius generalis Dei in terris, Vicarius Filii* " *Dei*, with various others, were by dint of numeral powers, " and ſuch like calculations, all made to produce the exact com- " plement 666. At that time I thought ſome attention was due " to thoſe ingenious ſpeculations; but on further inquiry I ſoon " found, that not only the names above mentioned would make " up the required number, but perhaps an hundred and fifty " other names, that could no more be ſuppoſed to have any con- " nection with the contents of the Apocalypſe than the *man in* " *the moon*. I then ſaw, that *all ſuch explications* could not be the " effect of that wiſdom ſpoken of in the 13th chapter, and to " which we are invited; but that there muſt be ſome other " hidden meaning, with which the learned were unacquainted. " It did not ſatisfy me, that *Lateinos, Romiith, Vicarius Filii Dei*, " or even *Ludovicus*, made up the complement 666, when other " words were to be found, that did the ſame, ſuch as *Joſeph* " *Smith, Tomkins, Benjamin Bennet*, and what is ſingular " enough, the *Rev. Joſ. Prieſtley*; for by the magical power of " numerals I could bring them all to ſing the ſame ſong, *ſix hun-* " *dred and ſixty ſix*. It was indeed a *curious* circumſtance; but I " thought *that* not ſufficient for one who is in ſearch of genuine " truth; neither did I then, nor do I now think, that a mere " *rebus* or *conundrum* is worthy a place in thoſe oracles of divine " truth, whoſe author is no leſs than the great JEHOVAH, the " GOD of heaven and earth." *Ibid.* 284, 286. " As the true " meaning of the number 666 may be ſeen at large in Baron " SWEDEN-

obligation without law, and there is no law without conſtituted relation; and the one flows from the other as a neceſſary effect. The only *poſſible* way, therefore, of exempting us from obligation to the

[a] SWEDENBORG's *Apocalypſe Revealed*, I ſhall here only obſerve, "that the whole chapter in which it is contained, gives a de- "ſcription of the faith of the Proteſtant or Reformed churches, "particularly in reſpect to its ſeparation from charity or "good works, and that the number of the beaſt denotes — *the "quality of that faith, as being a complex of the moſt enormous falſes!* "It is called the *number of a man*, becauſe *number* ſignifies *quality*, "and *man* ſignifies *wiſdom* and intelligence, but in the oppoſite "ſenſe, as in the preſent caſe, ſelf-derived wiſdom; for it is ſaid "*of thoſe who* ſeparate faith from charity. I have already ob- "ſerved, that a whole church, or community of men, appears "before the Lord as *one man*: it is for this reaſon that the *quality* "*of a church* is, in the letter of ſcripture, ſaid to be the number "*of* a man." *Ibid.* 288.

"He who knoweth nothing of the ſpiritual ſenſe of the word, "little thinketh that by a garden, a grove, and a wood, are meant "wiſdom, intelligence, ſcience; that by the olive, the vine, the "cedar, the poplar, and the oak, are meant the good and truth "of the church, under the different characters of celeſtial, ſpiri- "tual, rational, natural, and ſenſual; that by a lamb, a ſheep, "a goat, a calf, and an ox, are meant innocence, charity, and "natural affection; that by mountains, hills, and valleys, are "meant the higher, the lower, and the loweſt things relating to "the church; alſo, that by Egypt is ſignified what is ſcientific, "by Aſſhur what is rational, by Edom what is natural, by the "children of Ammon the adulteration of truth, by the Philiſtines "faith without charity, by Tyre and Sidon the knowledges of "goodneſs and truth, by Gog external worſhip without internal; "in general, by Jacob in the word is underſtood the church "natural, by Iſrael the church ſpiritual, and by Judah the "church celeſtial." *Ibid.* 291. On the hiſtory of 1 Sam. chap. v. and vi. it is thus remarked: "That all theſe devices

of

moral law, properly ſo called, is to annihilate our human exiſtence. — This *law*, which is the rule of right and wrong, will be the ſtandard of meaſure in judgment, the impartial balance to weigh the varied characters

" of the Philiſtine diviners were correſpondences, is evident from " their ſignification, which is this; the Philiſtines themſelves " ſignified thoſe who are influenced by faith ſeparate from cha- " rity; Dagon repreſented their religious worſhip; the emerods, " wherewith they were ſmitten, ſignified the natural loves, which, " if ſeparated from ſpiritual love, are unclean; and mice ſigni- " fied the devaſtation of the church, by falſifications of truth; " a new cart ſignified natural doctrine of the church; for chariot, " in the word, ſignifieth doctrine derived from ſpiritual truths; " the milch-kine ſignified good natural affections; the golden " emerods ſignified the natural loves purified and made good; " the golden mice ſignified the devaſtation of the church re- " moved by means of goodneſs; for gold in the word ſignifieth " goodneſs; the lowing of the kine in the way ſignified the " difficult converſion of the concupiſcences of evil in the na- " tural man into good affections; the offering of the kine and " the cart as a burnt-offering, ſignified that thus the God of " Iſrael was rendered propitious. All theſe things then, which " the Philiſtines did by the advice of their diviners, were correſ- " pondences; from which it appears that that ſcience was long " preſerved among the Gentiles." *Ibid.* 296. " The reaſon " why the ſcience of correſpondences, which is the true key to the " ſpiritual ſenſe of the word, was not diſcovered to later ages " [though it remained amongſt many eaſtern nations, even till the " coming of the Lord] was, becauſe *the chriſtians of the primitive " church were men of ſuch great ſimplicity, that it was to no purpoſe " to diſcover it to them*; for had it been diſcovered, they would " have found no uſe in it, nor would they have underſtood it." *Ibid.* 300.

2. The *ſecond coming of our Lord*. " With reſpect to the Lord's " *ſecond advent*, the doctrine of the New Church is this; that the " Lord cannot come *in perſon* into the material world, becauſe " ſince

characters of mankind. By this will be judged the patriarchs and prophets, the twelve apoſtles of the lamb, confeſſors and martyrs, as well as the ignorant and wicked, who know not GOD and obey not

 the

" ſince his aſcenſion into heaven he is in his glorified humanity, " and in this humanity, although it is omnipreſent, he cannot be " ſeen by any man unleſs his ſpiritual eyes be firſt opened, as was " the caſe with all who ſaw him after his reſurrection; for as a " material eye can ſee nothing but matter, ſo the Lord's glorified " body being ſubſtantial, and not material, can only be ſeen by a " ſpiritual eye. Indeed it is a clear caſe to me, that, were the " the Lord to make his *perſonal* appearance among men in the un- " clouded ſplendour of his divine humanity, it would be attended " with more certain deſtruction to the whole race of mankind, " than if this ball of earth, together with all its inhabitants, were " *caſt into the Sun.*" *Ibid.* 305. " The whole paſſage [Acts i. 11. " *Ye men of Galilee, why look ye up to heaven?* &c.] is the record of " a tranſaction that occurred, *not in the natural*, but in the ſpiritual " world; for, as has been already proved, the Lord never was, " nor could be, ſeen after the reſurrection, by the natural eyes of " any man. He was then in the lower parts of the ſpiritual " world; conſequently his perſonal aſcent muſt have been from " *thence* into heaven, and not from the material world, which he " had left forty days before, viz. at the time of his reſurrection. " Beſides, there are clouds in the ſpiritual world, equally as well " as in the natural world; and the clouds of the former, are more " properly called the *clouds of heaven*, than the latter, which in " fact are nothing but the *clouds of the earth*. It is evident, there- " fore, that what the angels ſaid of Jeſus returning from heaven " in like manner as he went up into heaven, ought to be under- " ſtood as alluding to his appearance in the ſpiritual world, at the " time of his ſecond coming, and not to any perſonal appearance " in the natural world. To men on earth who are enlightened " ſo as to diſcern the ſpiritual ſenſe of the ſcriptures, the Lord " appears as divine truth: but to thoſe inhabitants of the ſpiritual " world, who in heart acknowledge him as the only GOD of

" heaven

the goſpel. No evangelical *liberty*, extend it to any conceiveable degree, can form an exemption from being obliged here, and judged hereafter, by this rule. Public judgment does not *create* a law to judge

" heaven and earth, he not only manifeſts himſelf in the character " of divine truth, but alſo occaſionally preſents himſelf in perſon, " deſcending in the ſame glorious manner, as the men of Galilee " ſaw him aſcend. And thus the event which the angels fore- " told, hath actually taken place." *Ibid.* 306. " Clouds denote " the literal ſenſe of the word; and riding upon a cloud ſignifies " inſtruction in divine truth. The ſame was repreſented by the " thick cloud in which JEHOVAH deſcended upon Mount Sinai, " when the law was delivered to Moſes, that being the *firſt-fruits* " of the word. From all which circumſtances it is evident, that " the Lord's ſecond coming in the clouds of heaven, which is for " the purpoſe of bringing into his church the *full harveſt* of the " word, can have no other meaning than his more immediate " preſence in the literal ſenſe of the word, in conſequence of the " revelation which is now taking place of its ſpiritual ſenſe." *Ibid.* 309.

3. The *laſt judgment*. " Baron SWEDENBORG aſſerts, that " the laſt judgment was accompliſhed in the ſpiritual world, in " the year 1757. — The *preciſe moment* when it began, may be as " difficult to determine, as it would be for you to point out the " *firſt day* in which Frenchmen began to think of civil liberty. — " A ſimilar change [to that which took place at the time of the " Lord's firſt coming] has taken place in the minds of men ſince " the year 1757, the period when (according to Baron SWE- " DENBORG) ſpiritual liberty was reſtored, by the accompliſh- " ment of the laſt judgment in the ſpiritual world. And it may " even be ſeen in the evident decline of eccleſiaſtical power, par- " ticularly in roman catholic countries. It may be ſeen in the " general ſpirit of free inquiry that begins to pervade the world; " in the expulſion of Jeſuits from different kingdoms; in the " comparatively timid and cautious proceedings of the inquiſition, " in thoſe countries where it is not yet aboliſhed; in the ſuppreſ- " ſion

judge by, but only try the characters and works of men according to a law *already exiſting*, and which was the ſtandard of obedience in a ſtate of probation.

§ 4. What

" ſion of monaſteries; in the pope's ſilent and humble reſignation " of thoſe more than regal powers, which his predeceſſors had " uſurped and impiouſly exerciſed over kings and princes; in the " benevolent exertions of the friends of humanity for the aboli- " tion of ſlavery; in the new and ſucceſsful inſtitutions for the " gradual inſtruction and reformation of the poor; in the im- " proved regulations of priſons, and numerous other inſtances of " national police; in the humane ſocieties formed for the reco- " very of perſons apparently dead; and, laſtly, it may be ſeen " *plainly and* decidedly in the actual commencement of the New " Church, called the New Jeruſalem, whoſe members require no " miracles to convince them of truth, being in poſſeſſion of what " is a thouſand times more excellent and ſatisfactory, namely, the " true interpretation of the ſcriptures, ſupported by clear and ra- " tional evidence. — Although we really believe, that the laſt " *general* judgment was accompliſhed in the year 1757, yet we " alſo maintain, that every man *in particular* will be judged im- " mediately after death, and that he will be rewarded according " to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or " evil. The laſt judgment we conſider to be of various ſignifica- " tions, general, particular, and ſingular; *general*, as having re- " ſpect to the end of a church; *particular*, in reference to the " death of individuals; and *ſingular*, with reſpect to the future " ſtate of man, as determined by every thought and affection, " every word and work." *Ibid.* p. 310. 52. 315.

4. The *reſurrection of the body*. " As the notions commonly " entertained about the reſurrection of the dead, are, like thoſe on " the laſt judgment and the ſecond coming of the Lord, drawn " from the mere letter of ſcripture, without any knowledge of its " ſpiritual ſenſe, it is not to be expected, that they ſhould ap- " proach any nearer the truth than them.—All this [1 Theſſ. " iv. 15—17.] may be very eaſily explained, conſiſtently with the " doctrines

§ 4. What is the proper *object* of judgment? This queſtion is not a little important, and the proper ſolution of it may tend to illuſtrate what otherwiſe might ſeem involved in great obſcurity.

1. The

" doctrines of the New Church, by conſidering it as ſpoken ac-
" cording to the appearances of the literal ſenſe of the word,
" which deſcribes ſpiritual things by ſuch images and expreſſions
" as are accommodated to the apprehenſion of men in the natural
" world. — We maintain that the new heaven is formed before
" the new earth, that is, the New Church takes place in the
" ſpiritual world before it does in the natural world; which
" agrees with this ſaying, that the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt.
" And as the church on earth will be conjoined with the church
" in heaven, ſo as together to form only one church, like internal
" and external, therefore it is ſaid, that we who are alive and re-
" main, ſhall be *caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the*
" *Lord in the air*; that is, we ſhall be enabled, at the Lord's
" ſecond coming, when the ſpiritual ſenſe of the word ſhall be
" revealed, to penetrate through the ſhade and obſcurity of the
" letter, and, diſcerning the glory of its inner contents, be elevated
" into the heat and light of heaven, by virtue of which we *ſhall*
" worſhip the Lord alone in ſpirit and in truth, as angels do
" above." *Ibid.* p. 327. — " To be changed in a moment, in the
" twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump, means nothing elſe but
" the certainty of paſſing from a natural into a ſpiritual ſtate, at
" the time of the Lord's ſecond coming; and this change may
" take place, according to its meaſure, as well with thoſe who are
" now living, as with thoſe who are already dead. Not that a
" material body ſhall be ever converted into a ſpiritual body, for
" this is a thing impoſſible, as being contrary to divine order;
" but on the death and removal of the former, together with all
" the imperfections of its nature, man will be endowed with a
" ſpiritual ſubſtantial body, in which he will live for ever, and no
" more ſee the corruption of death. — The material body,
" that is laid in the grave, forms no part of that ſpiritual
" and ſubſtantial body, with which man riſes; but the ſpirit,

" which

1. The immediate object of [illegible] the great Judge, will not be, By *what* and [illegible] perform ſuch acts of obedience? or *when* and you holy diſpoſitions? What the Lawgiver commands,

" which is within the material body, quits it after death, and " then man lives as a man in all reſpects as before, only in a more " perfect ſtate, in conſequence of being diſincumbered of the groſs " body of clay." *Ibid.* p. 331, 333.

After apologizing for the length of theſe extracts, which exhibit a pretty complete ſummary of the New Jeruſalem diſtinguiſhing tenets, in reference to the above points, I ſhall now ſubjoin a few remarks.

1. The whole ſcience of correſpondences, if properly analyſed, ſeems *nothing elſe* than the well known doctrine of *analogy* abuſed, and carried to an extravagant length. And the chief part of that abuſe is, that every eſſence is related to its form, and every cauſe to its effect, in a *ſenſible* manner. This led the AUDEANS of old, commonly called the *Anthropomorphites*, to aſcribe to the divine being the *human form*; and, very lately, ſuffered a writer of reſpectable abilities to expreſs himſelf in the following manner: " When we aſſign to GOD the form of a man, you ſhould recollect " that we conſider him as a *divine* and *infinite man*, whoſe func- " tions and mode of life muſt alſo be infinite and divine. We " ſay he is and muſt be a *ſubſtance*, becauſe all other ſubſtances are " derived from him; and as we are aſſured that no ſubſtance can " exiſt without a *form*, therefore we are under the neceſſity of " aſcribing to GOD ſome form or other. But we know none " equal in dignity and majeſty to the *human form*. — *Man is a* " *mortal God*, and *God an immortal man*." HINDMARSH, *ut ſup.* p. 225, 226. The cardinal queſtion relative to the ſubject before us is plainly this: Who acts the wiſeſt part, he who allows there may be forms of which man can have no *ſenſible* determinate conception; or, he who abides by the conſequence of aſcribing *ſenſible* forms to *ſpiritual* ſubſtances, and ſuch a form even to GOD himſelf. The beſt reaſon why the ſpiritual world muſt correſpond in form with the natural is, becauſe *we know of no better form*; but a ſufficient

mands, "be ye holy in all manner of converſation, "be ye perfect," the Judge requires. The *ſource* of ability, the divine *concurrence* in all human acts; how much or how little we have been aſſiſted to diſcharge

ficient reaſon why GOD cannot have a human form is, becauſe *every ſenſible* form, properly ſpeaking, is unworthy of his infinite glory. As to the inſtances produced, of *horſe* ſignifying *underſtanding*, and ſo on, according to the ſcience of correſpondences, I leave it with every intelligent reader to judge whether they are the effect of *ſcientific* knowledge, or of whimſical credulity? and whether the *old doctrine* of the analogy of faith be not a better key for biblical interpretation than the *new ſcience* of correſpondences?

2. The new doctrine of Chriſt's *ſecond advent* is founded on this; *inaſmuch as Chriſt is in his glorified humanity he cannot be ſeen by a material eye.* We have a right to interrogate, Why not? Is the power of Chriſt to work miracles exhauſted? Or, may there no adequate change take place in the bodies of men at his coming, to capacitate them for the view? Here are, on the *new* ſcheme, ſeveral things taken for granted without evidence. The literal ſenſe muſt be *rejected* — Chriſt did not ſhew himſelf *corporeally* to the diſciples after the reſurrection; and he cannot render himſelf *viſible* perſonally to men in our world without deſtroying them, that is, human bodies cannot even by omnipotence be formed to behold his glorified humanity; and yet the divine eſſence has a *human* form. Theſe are a ſtring of ſingular aſſertions without proof, which appear neither honourable to GOD nor comfortable to men. It is propheſied that ſome ſhould ſay, *Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth ſtanding out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, periſhed. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the ſame word are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire againſt the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.* — And let them further know, *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, as ſome men count ſlackneſs; but is longſuffering*

to

diſcharge incumbent duty; is out of the queſtion, —Whereas,

2. The immediate object of inquiry will be, What *means* of obedience and perfection have you enjoyed? According to the nature and degree of *moral means*, muſt needs be the nature and degree of our obligation. "That ſervant who knew his "Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither "did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with "many

*to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.** That is, "perſons will ariſe who, "following their private fancies and deſires, ſhall deny the literal "ſenſe of Chriſt's ſecond coming; impertinently appealing to "the conſtancy of the courſe of nature, *wilfully overlooking the fact* "*that there were ſettled laws of nature before the flood*; and who "ſhall be as averſe to believe a miraculous deviation from thoſe "laws as the Antediluvians were."

3. As to the laſt judgment and the reſurrection of the body, which the catholic church have always underſtood to take place *at the end of time*, it is ſufficient to remark, that the new mode of explaining them muſt ſtand or fall with the doctrine of the ſecond advent; and all theſe together with that of the ſcience of correſpondences. He who can give up his underſtanding to ſuch far-fetched analogy, and venture to build his theology upon it with his future hopes, may perhaps regret it when too late. By every ſoul divinely taught he will be pitied, but envied he cannot be. To found a theological ſyſtem on the baſis preſented to us by the ſcience of correſpondences, is not unlike "building a cathedral on "the ſtalk of a tulip." As the *divine ſcience* of animal magnetiſm has performed ſo many wonderful feats in phyſic; who knows what may be effected in divinity by the late diſcovery of a *ſcience* ſo long loſt from among mortals!

* 2 Peter iii. 3—10.

" many ſtripes. But he that knew it not, and did " commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten " with few ſtripes; for unto whomſoever much is " given, of him much ſhall be required; and to " whom men (or GOD the righteous Governor) " have committed much, of him they will aſk the " more." * Now, regenerating *grace*, and ſovereign influence, muſt not be confounded with ſuch moral *means* as are a ſufficient baſis of obligation. On the latter, the accountable creature has an equitable claim; on the former none at all, otherwiſe it would be no more grace. — Moreover;

3. Another immediate object of inquiry will be, What have you been; what have you done, or omitted doing; and what are you now? How have you *improved*, or *miſimproved*, your talents, or the means of improvement? Have you *repented?* have you *believed?* has your *character* been that of penitents and believers? have you gratefully received what I freely gave you? have you done what I commanded you, and abſtained from what I prohibited? For " the kingdom of heaven is as " a man travelling into a far country, who call. " ed his own ſervants, and delivered unto them " his goods. And unto one he gave five ta- " lents, to another two, and to another one, &c. " After a long time the Lord of thoſe ſervants " cometh, and reckoneth with them." — " Unto " every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall " have abundance: but from him that hath not " ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath. And " caſt

* Luke xii. 47, 48.

"caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant into outer darkneſs: "there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth." —"When the Son of man ſhall come in his "glory, and all the holy angels with him, then "ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory; and "before him ſhall be gathered all nations; and he "ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhep- "herd divideth his ſheep from the goats. And "he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the "goats on the left. Then ſhall the King ſay to "them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my "Father — for I was an hungered, and ye gave "me meat; I was thirſty and ye gave me drink; "I was a ſtranger and ye took me in; naked and "ye clothed me; I was ſick and ye viſited me; I "was in priſon and ye came unto me, &c. —Then "ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire "—for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no "meat, &c. — And theſe ſhall go away into ever- "laſting puniſhment; but the righteous into life "eternal." *

§ 5. But what is the reſpective influence of *equity* and *ſovereignty* in this awful tranſaction? In reply I obſerve two things:—

1. It is but *equitable* that thoſe who are ſhort of moral rectitude ſhould be condemned according to their abuſe of the moral means and opportunities they enjoyed. What plea can be urged againſt this poſition? "We are ſure that the judgment of "God

* Matt. xxv. *paſſim*.

" God is according to truth; — O man, deſpiſeſt " thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, " and longſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs " of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after " thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up " unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and " revelation of the righteous judgment of God; " who will render to every man according to his " deeds. — To them that are contentious and do " not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, in- " dignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh " upon every ſoul of man that doeth evil, of the " Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile." * If thou doeſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? And *if thou doeſt not well*, the evil of puniſhment, the neceſſary adjunct of *ſin*, as a growling monſter, *lieth at the door*, ready to devour thee.† " The juſt wages of " ſin is death;" even that death which ſtands oppoſed to *eternal life*. And " it is a *righteous* thing " with God to recompenſe *tribulation* to them who " trouble the church;" and " to take vengeance on " them who know not God," while they had the means of knowing him, " and that obey not the " goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." — On the contrary,

§ 6. 2. Seeing " every mouth is ſtopped, and " all the world is become guilty before God," no one would be acquitted in judgment without the interpoſition of *ſovereign* favour. " If thou, Lord, " ſhouldſt mark iniquity; O Lord, who ſhall " ſtand?"

* Rom. ii. 2—9. † Gen. iv. 7.

" ſtand?" ‡ To illuſtrate this poſition let the following things be noticed:

(1.) It was an act of ſovereignty to *defer* the *full* puniſhment of ſin, with reſpect to all offenders; and to conſtitute ſuch a plan as admitted of delay, without reflecting diſhonour on the divine government. Had *ſtrict juſtice* taken place on the *firſt* offence, puniſhment muſt have taken place of probation *immediately*.

(2.) It is by a ſucceſſion of ſovereign acts that one ſinner, in preference to another, is *prepared* for an honourable acquittal. Of this kind are *juſtification*, by which the unworthy are pardoned and *accepted in the beloved*; *regeneration*, whereby the dead in ſin are made *alive to God* by the operation of the Holy Spirit; *adoption*, in virtue of which the outcaſts are brought into the family of GOD; *progreſſive ſanctification*, which is every where conſidered as an effect of which GOD is the cauſe: ſinners are *ſanctified by God the Father*,* Chriſt is *made to them* the transforming cauſe of *ſanctification*,† and ſuch are *changed* from ſin to holineſs, *from glory to glory by the ſpirit of the Lord*. ‖

(3.) It is by a ſovereign conſtitution that the *beſt* of men will be *acquitted* in judgment; for in many things *all offend*, and were GOD in extreme juſtice to mark iniquity in the pardoned, renewed, adopted and ſanctified, *none would be able to ſtand*.

(4.) It is through ſovereign favour that the future bliſs of the redeemed was *prepared* for, and will be *conferred* upon them. The inheritance was deſigned

‡ Pſalm cxxx. 3. * Jude 1. † 1 Cor. i. 30. ‖ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

for them before they had a being, and the ſervice bears no proportion to the reward, whether we conſider the quality, the quantity, or the duration of that ſervice.

§ 7. We muſt remark, however, that though ſtrict equity would condemn the leaſt imperfect of human characters, nevertheleſs the honourable acquittance and remuneration of the bleſſed will appear to reſt on equitable grounds. For,

1. The proviſion made in the appointment of a Mediator, the favour conferred in the imputation of worthineſs, the mode adopted in the communication of purity, were by no means incompatible with the ſtricteſt equity. Its line was not *tranſgreſſed* by the ſteps of ſovereignty, though left at a glorious diſtance on the favourable ſide.

2. That there ſhould be made a great and laſting difference between the righteous and the unrighteous, the good and the bad, between *penitents*, who have mourned for ſin, hated and forſaken it; *believers*, who received GOD's teſtimony of his Son, and of every revealed truth; *obedient* ones, who took up their croſs daily to follow Chriſt, through the tribulations of time; *good and faithful ſervants*, who improved their talents for the glory of GOD and the good of men — that there ſhould be a difference between *theſe* and the oppoſite characters, every one muſt allow to be equitable. The ſupreme Governor propoſes the reward conditionally; as far, then, as the condition is performed, as to *right-*

righteouſneſs which gives a title, or *holineſs* which renders meet for heaven, it can be no infringement of the rights of juſtice that the one is provided for us, and the other wrought in us, by a ſovereign hand.

§ 8. Let us now enquire, What will be the *effects* and conſequences of judgment? With reſpect to the righteous, there can be little doubt. Their happineſs, it is univerſally allowed, will be complete and everlaſting; a happineſs, which implies the purity of their nature, freedom from the moleſtations of evil, with a full, uninterrupted enjoyment of GOD the chief good.

On the contrary, the miſeries of the wicked will be great. What is there terrible in nature, or painful to humanity, which has not been employed by the righteous Governor to repreſent their miſeries? And, indeed, the moral impurity of their natures, not meliorated by grace, will prove as conſtant fuel to the fire of hell. To which we may add, as no ſmall ſource of their woe, perpetual moleſtations from every object that preſents itſelf. Even in this life, how different the ſenſation excited by a view of a number of innocent children, or an aſſembly of benevolent men, engaged in divine worſhip, or conſulting to promote the good of their fellow men, from what is felt by a view of a gang of robbers, a lawleſs banditti, or malevolent deſperadoes? What can exceed the woe of baniſhment from GOD, accompanied with a ſenſe of his

diſpleaſure, an accuſing conſcience, felt impurity, with inſulting and tormenting devils?

§ 9. But it has been formerly aſſerted by ORIGEN, and of late by ſome American divines, who have at this day ſome abettors in England, *chiefly* * among the Socinians, that the miſery of the wicked will not be *everlaſting*. On this opinion, which for many ages was deemed heretical, let us beſtow a few thoughts.

In this controverſy, the firſt point of inveſtigation ſhould be, What is the *due* of a moral agent as tranſgreſſor of a law holy, juſt and good? When this is clearly aſcertained, no doubt can remain with reſpect to the queſtion, What is *equitable* conduct in GOD towards him? Now, if moral evil be not followed with natural and penal evil, an *accountable* creature may ſin with *impunity*, which involves a contradiction. But this natural evil is not a ſomething *extraneous* to the ſubject; it ariſes from the defect itſelf introduced by ſin, and the inſeparable circumſtances of the ſinner. And this miſery will be ſo far from receiving mitigation from the idea of the divine benevolence, that the latter will rather increaſe it. The more amiable and glorious GOD is in himſelf, the more intolerable will be a conſcious contrariety to him. Moral *means*, from all juſt views of their nature, will *never enſure* a change of heart in the ſinner. His *free* nature, if left on the

* Mr. WINCHESTER, indeed, who is a ſtrenuous advocate for the doctrine of *univerſal reſtoration*, belongs to another claſs of chriſtians.

the ground of mere equity, *may* revolt *everlaſtingly*; and the ſame nature, as *depraved*, neceſſarily *muſt*, except a *miracle* intervene. As ſoon may rivers run to their fountains, matter ſpecifically heavy recede from the center, or any great law of nature be reverſed, as natural evil ceaſe to exiſt in a moral agent fallen from rectitude.

§ 10. To begin this controverſy, therefore, with the examination of ſcriptural phraſes, ſuch as *forever*, *forever and ever*, *eternal*, *everlaſting*, as if there was no evidence of the doctrine (that the juſt wages of ſin is never-ending pain) *prior* to the conſideration of ſuch phraſes, is not a fair procedure. Wherefore, the true ſtate of the queſtion is, Whether GOD has given us poſitive evidence ſufficient to engage our belief, that he will ſo far *ſuperſede the claims of ſtrict equity by an act of ſovereign benevolence* as to liberate the inhabitants of hell from the ſlavery of ſin, and the miſery it merits, by conſtituting them righteous, and *miraculouſly* changing their nature from ſinful to holy. To ſuppoſe that puniſhment itſelf (or *correction*, as the perſons I have in view chooſe to call it) will effect a reformation, betrays great inattention to the *nature* of that evil which it is thought capable of removing. For we ſhould conſider it as conſiſting, not in a poſitive infliction from the *mere pleaſure* of GOD, as if any way oppoſite to his infinite benevolence in general, or his *rectoral* benevolence to the ſufferer in particular, but in a *conſciouſneſs* of defect, of contrariety to rectitude, to holineſs, and to every perfection of GOD. To

expreſs this evil no images which nature can furniſh are ſufficiently ſtrong. And to prevent this inconceivably dreadful evil we muſt look not to *equity* but *ſovereignty*; not to the benevolence of a ruler or a judge, but to that of a Being of abſolute ſupremacy; a ſupremacy that has no other limits in its operations than the glory of the divine Eſſence, and the wiſdom of its decrees.

§ 11. We conclude, then, that prior to ſcriptural evidence on either ſide, the verdict, in point of *equity*, is on the ſide of perpetual ſuffering. For the ſame reaſon that it appears there ſhould be *any* puniſhment, (independent of ſcripture evidence,) it alſo appears there ſhould be a *perpetuity* of it; ſeeing that puniſhment is not founded on the *bare will* of GOD, but on the *guilt* and *depravity* of the creature, which depravity and guilt if ever removed muſt be done by a ſovereign act. But this can be no further known than it is revealed; therefore the queſtion remains, *Where is the evidence that God will by an act of mere ſovereignty, put a period to what muſt of itſelf continue, and reſcue infernal priſoners from ſin and woe?*

§ 12. A full diſcuſſion of the ſubject on this ground, which is the only fair one, does not comport with my plan in this Eſſay. Beſides, it has been of late profeſſedly handled in an elaborate manner by a writer of no inconſiderable name.* However, as there are ſome things relating to the ſubject,

* Dr. JONATHAN EDWARDS's Anſwer to Dr. CHAUNCY.

ſubject, which have been *lately advanced*,† that may appear to militate againſt what I have now aſſerted, I ſhall take ſome notice of them in the form of objections.

§ 13. 1. "It is evident, from this view of the "matter, that the Jews reject Chriſt and his reli- "gion, upon *as good ground*, as you reject the uni- "verſal reſtoration, and perhaps better; for *you* "*have nothing to plead againſt the reſtoration, but ſome* "*threatenings of puniſhments*, which are called *ever-* "*laſting*, or *eternal*, in our tranſlation; but they "plead expreſs promiſes of the *everlaſting* continu- "ance of their church-ſtate and worſhip, in oppo- "ſition to chriſtianity." * *Nothing to plead againſt the reſtoration but threatenings.*‡ Yes; we plead guilt unpardoned, depravity unremoved, the ſinful impotence of the creature, the inefficacy of *all* moral means whatever, and the operations of EQUITY. — *The Jews reject Chriſt and his religion upon as good*

† By Mr. ELHANAN WINCHESTER, in his Treatiſe entitled, *The Univerſal Reſtoration*, Exhibited in Four Dialogues between a Miniſter and his Friend. *Second Edition*, London, 1792.

* The *Univer. Reſtor.* p. 16.

‡ "*Were there no promiſes* or intimations to the contrary in "ſcripture, I ſhould not require it to be threatened in any ſtronger "terms than it is; *I ſhould believe it as a truth*, though I might "not be able, at preſent, to ſee the propriety and equity thereof; "I ſhould never ſuffer my weak reaſon to gainſay divine revela- "tion: but my difficulty ariſes from theſe expreſs promiſes of "GOD, which compoſe ſo great a part of that book which is "given us as a rule of faith and practice, and which promiſes "expreſsly aſſert a future ſtate of things, beyond ſin, ſorrow, "pain and death of every kind." The *Univer. Reſtor.* p. 24.

ground, as you reject the univerſal reſtoration. Perhaps not; for there was no *natural, infallible,* and *equitable* connection between the *deſign* of the jewiſh *church-ſtate* and the *rejection* of the Meſſiah; the connection was of their *own making,* and had no exiſtence but in their miſtaken views of Moſes and his law, of Chriſt and his goſpel. Whereas the connection that ſubſiſts between the ſubject of guilt and ſuffering is *natural, infallible,* and *equitable*; and therefore can be removed only by a ſovereign hand in a way which we may denominate miraculous. And conſequently, the force of the *terms* expreſſing the duration of both diſpenſations being *equal,* the concluſion muſt be as unequal as the connections before mentioned.

§ 14. 2. "Your reaſoning would be concluſive, "upon the ſuppoſition that there are *two eternal* "*principles,* viz. *good* and *evil*; if it can be proved, "that evil is coexiſtent with goodneſs, that it hath "always been: then, the abſolute eternity of ſin "and miſery may be eaſily inferred. This is the "true foundation of *endleſs miſery,* and it came "from the pagan theology." † It ſeems, then, that evil *may* coexiſt with goodneſs for *ages of ages,* but *may not* any longer, without running into *Manicheiſm.* The queſtion is not now, What is the ſovereign good pleaſure of God reſpecting the termination of evil, but whether it is *inconſiſtent* with the divine perfections to *perpetuate* the ſufferings of the guilty. If not inconſiſtent to continue them for

† *Ibid.* p. 30.

for a thouſand years, by what rule can we draw the line as a boundary? Is it by the rule of exactly proportioning the puniſhment to the crime? * But this aſſumes what is not granted, that the demerit of ſin is to be eſtimated by the *temporary duration* of the ſuffering, as well as the *intenſeneſs of degree*. As it is not doubted, for good reaſons, that there are numerous degrees on the ſcale of happineſs, for the ſame reaſons why ſhould it be doubted that there degrees greatly varied on that of ſufferings? The variation in *degree*, therefore, is adequate to preſerve an equitable proportion, irreſpective of the *continuance*. The rights of what attribute would be infringed upon, the glory of what perfection would be eclipſed, by not liberating a guilty priſoner? If continued ſufferings be contrary to *equity*, there lies a ground of *claim* on deliverance, which the ſufferer may plead as his *due*. But this is too impious to be admitted. If contrary to *benevolence*,† then for a period called *ages of ages*, GOD in puniſhing offenders, or leaving them to themſelves, acts in contrariety to his benevolence, which is equally impious to imagine. Is the ſuppoſition contrary to *wiſdom?* It is ſufficient to ſay, that we have no *data*,

* "To ſuppoſe a poor ignorant heathen, or a child of ten years "old, will remain in miſery *as long* as the moſt perſecuting tyrant, "or apoſtate chriſtian, ſeems to contradict all the ideas we have of "juſtice and *equity*, as well as of goodneſs; for in this caſe, who "can ſuppoſe that each one is *exactly rewarded* according to his "works?" The *Univer. Reſtor.* p. 74.

† "The univerſal benevolence, or the love of GOD to his "creatures, is one of the firſt principles from which the general "reſtoration is deduced." *Ibid.* p. 89.

data, in the preſent caſe, to determine what is or is not conformable to wiſdom, but what GOD himſelf has revealed, which refers to another queſtion. I therefore conclude that the inference in favour of *endleſs miſery* is fairly drawn, from the nature of *ſin* and the *equity* of GOD, without having recourſe to the abſurd notion of two eternal principles.

§ 15. 3. "Another great principle, upon which "the reſtoration depends, is, *that Chriſt died for* "*all.*"* If, then, redemption is not *univerſal*, there is no inference to be drawn from it in favour of the reſtoration. But ſuppoſe the truth of the poſition; how does it imply the inference? His death muſt be conſidered either as making a proper *purchaſe*, or an *expedient* on the part of GOD on account of which he beſtows favours. If the *former*, why ſhould Chriſt ſuffer the purchaſed poſſeſſion to lie in torments for ages of ages? Does not his blood cleanſe from *all ſin* without the ſeverity of ſo long a period of torments? If the *latter*, why ſhould this great expedient in the divine œconomy imply a reſtoration any more than other diſplays of goodneſs and favour rejected and abuſed? Chriſt having died for all, therefore, can no more *enſure* a reſtoration than a favour beſtowed, but yet abuſed, can promote friendſhip.

§ 16. 4. "Another principle upon which the "univerſal doctrine depends, is, *the unchangeableneſs* "*of God:* whom he loves once, he always loves; "he

* The *Univer. Reſtor.* p. 91.

" he loved his creatures when he made them, as " none can well deny; their ſins he never loved, " nor ever will; he hath declared, that he loved us " when ſinners, but never *as* ſinners. His eternal " and conſtant hatred of all ſin, and his unchange- " able love of all his creatures, are of the nature of " primary truths; from which the doctrine of the " general reſtoration may be eaſily and plainly in- " ferred." * Here we might aſk, If puniſhment for *ages of ages* be not inimical to GOD's unchange- able hatred of ſin, and love of all his creatures, how can the *unchangeableneſs* of Deity prevent the pro- traction of that puniſhment? *Whom he loves once he* ALWAYS *loves.* Conſequently, love is not incom- patible with puniſhment. *He loved his creatures when he made them; he loved us* WHEN *ſinners, but never* AS *ſinners.* Therefore, to love as *creatures*, though not as *ſinners*, is perfectly conſiſtent with a ſtate of *puniſhment.* From whence it follows, that the un- changeableneſs of GOD contributes nothing to the doctrine of reſtoration.

§ 17. 5. " Another of the firſt principles of the " reſtoration, is, *the immutability of God's counſels*, " which he hath confirmed by an oath, *That by two* " *immutable things*, (viz. his word and oath) *in which* " *it was impoſſible for God to lie, we might have a* " *ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay* " *hold upon the hope ſet before us.* Heb. vi. 17. 18." *Who have fled for refuge.* Is not here an evident implication, that thoſe who *have not fled* for refuge are

* The *Univer. Reſtor.* p. 96.

are debarred from conſolation? But we, not admitting the paſſages adduced from the New Teſtament, as expreſſive of the divine counſel to tranſlate any from hell to heaven, the *immutability* of thoſe counſels can contribute nothing to eſtabliſh the argument.

What I before aſſerted, I now repeat, that my deſign is not to enter into the great argument, Whether any promiſſory intimations of ſcripture may, or may not, be pertinently pleaded in favour of the reſtoration; but to ſhew that *endleſs puniſhment*, in the ſenſe before explained, is perfectly conſiſtent with, and fairly the reſult of the *equity of divine government*.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Containing a View of Sovereign Grace.

SECT. I.

Of the Sovereignty of Grace in propoſing an ultimate End.

§ 1. *The moral ſyſtem conſidered in reference to end and means.* § 2. *Divine wiſdom acting from deſign requires the fixing of an ultimate end for a free ſyſtem.* § 3. *Hence man the ſubject of liberty and neceſſity.* § 4. *The expediency of fixing an ultimate end from the defectibility of free agents, and the diſplay of equity and mercy.* § 5. *Diſplay of mercy the higher end, and what the ultimate.* § 6. *The immediate enquiry is not, What is the chief end; becauſe no act of ſovereignty.* § 7. *How* SOVEREIGNTY *appears in fixing on the praiſe of glorious grace in the ſalvation of the church as the ultimate end of our ſyſtem.*

§ 1. HAVING taken a view of divine moral *government*, and the perfect *equity* that reigns in every part; we now proceed to take a view of *ſovereign grace:* and as every ſyſtem implies an *ultimate end*, and *means* of accompliſhment; we ſhall

ſhall conſider the moral ſyſtem in reference to theſe two general parts, beginning, as it is moſt natural, with the former.

§ 2. God is infinitely wiſe. But it is the diſcriminative character of wiſdom not to act without deſign; and of infinite wiſdom to propoſe the *beſt end* to be accompliſhed in the *beſt manner*. If, therefore, moral government be conducted with wiſdom, it muſt needs refer to ſome ultimate end worthy of that wiſdom. That is, the *reſult* of free agency muſt have been a *ſettled point* before any creatures began to exerciſe their liberty. Prior to decretive choice every thing ſtood in the rank of *mere poſſibles*; the adoption, then, of one hypothetical ſyſtem in preference to another muſt have been an act of ſovereignty, and conſequently the ultimate point in which all the means terminate.

§ 3. This matter duly conſidered, it muſt follow, however paradoxical it may appear at firſt view, that man is at the ſame time, but in different reſpects, the ſubject of *liberty* and *neceſſity*. As in the hand of the moral Governor he is *free*; but as in the hand of ſovereign wiſdom he is *neceſſitated*. Liberty is eſſential to *government*, and neceſſity is eſſential to *wiſdom*. If not free he is not *accountable*, if the reſult of his conduct be not fixed he is not *ſafe*. The creature's ability not extending to *active goodneſs* without ſovereign aid, *liberty* is ſure to degenerate into *ſin* if left in the hand of mere equity; if, then,

then, the fatal conſequence be in any caſe avoided it is owing to *neceſſitating ſovereignty*.

§ 4. Infinite preſcience viewing the *defectibility* of free agents, and the moral ſyſtem *inevitably* falling if left in the hand of its own counſel, and tending to endleſs diſorder, diſtance, and miſery; and ſeeing neither *ſtrict equity* nor *ſovereign mercy* could be diſplayed without ſuffering the introduction of moral evil, wiſdom interpoſed to fix an ultimate end which every thing, however contingent in human eſtimation, ſhould infallibly ſubſerve. If the queſtion be put, *Why were free agents permitted to fall?* The anſwer is, indirectly, If they are not *liable* to fall, they would not be *free*; but more directly, Becauſe it was *good* that the divine attribute of *equity* ſhould be manifeſted *ad extra*, which without leaving the creature to itſelf could not be done; and to leave the creature to itſelf is the ſame thing as the ſufferance of moral evil. And if the queſtion be put, *Why are any redeemed from ſin and miſery?* The anſwer is, principally, Becauſe it was *good* that the divine attribute of *mercy* ſhould be diſplayed *ad extra*, which without a plan of redemption could not be done; and, in a ſecondary view, it was *good* to promote the happineſs of the creature as far as wiſdom permitted, which could be effected only by mercy.

§ 5. From what has been ſaid it appears, that a *diſplay of mercy*, or redeeming grace, is a *higher* end than the *diſplay of equity*; the latter ſerving as a ſubordinate

ſubordinate mean to the former. *Behold*, then, *the goodneſs and ſeverity of God!* Towards ſome goodneſs; towards others ſeverity. But the *ultimate end* that ſovereign wiſdom ſeems to have placed for the harmonious co-operation and tendency of all the parts of the human moral ſyſtem is, THE PRAISE OF REDEEMING GLORIOUS GRACE IN JESUS CHRIST.* (Eph. i. 6.)

§ 6. The

* "Since GOD can act only for his own *glory*, and can find *this* no where but in himſelf; he could have no other deſign in the *creation* of the world, than the eſtabliſhment of his *church*. — But joining *Jeſus Chriſt* to his church, and the church to the reſt of the world it is taken from, you raiſe to the glory of GOD a temple ſo majeſtic, magnificent and holy, that you will wonder perhaps he laid the foundations of it ſo late. — GOD loving himſelf by the neceſſity of his being, and willing to procure an infinite glory, an honour on all hands worthy of himſelf, conſults his wiſdom for accompliſhing his deſires. This *divine Wiſdom*, filled with love for him from whom he receives his being, by an eternal and ineffable generation, ſeeing nothing in all poſſible creatures worthy of the majeſty of his Father, offers himſelf, to eſtabliſh to his honour an eternal worſhip, and to preſent him, as high prieſt, a ſacrifice which, through the dignity of his perſon, ſhould be capable of contenting him. He repreſents to him infinite models for the temple to be raiſed to his glory; and, at the ſame time, all poſſible ways to execute his deſigns. — The holy ſcripture teaches us, that it is *Jeſus Chriſt* who ought to make all the beauty, the ſanctity, the grandeur, and magnificence of this work. If holy writ compare it to a *city*, it is *Jeſus Chriſt* who makes all the luſtre; it not being the ſun and the moon, but the glory of GOD and the light of the Lamb that ſhine upon it. When repreſenting it as a *living body*, whereof all the parts have a wonderful proportion, it is *Jeſus Chriſt* who is the head of it. 'Tis from him the ſpirit and life are communicated into all the members that compoſe it. Speaking of it as a *temple*, *Jeſus Chriſt* is the chief corner ſtone, which is the foundation of the building. 'Tis he who is the

§ 6. The attentive reader will obſerve, that our immediate inquiry is not, What is the *chief* end in the great ſyſtem of the univerſe? or in that noble part of it, the plan of redeeming grace? This, I apprehend, is not a matter of *choice*, and therefore is no act of *ſovereignty*. The reaſons why I think ſo are the following. Rectitude requires that the higheſt value ſhould be placed on the higheſt worth. GOD is poſſeſſed of infinite rectitude and infinite worth, and therefore muſt *neceſſarily* place the higheſt value on himſelf. But, to place the higheſt value on any given object, attainable in the proſecution of any plan, is the ſame as to make it ſuch an end, in

the high prieſt and the ſacrifice of it. — That which makes the *beauty* of a temple, is the order and variety of ornaments that are found in it. Thus to render the *living* temple of the divine majeſty worthy of its inhabitant, and proportionate to the wiſdom and infinite love of its author, all poſſible beauties are to make it up. But it is not ſo with this temple, raiſed to the glory of GOD, as with material ones. For that which conſtitutes the beauty of the ſpiritual edifice of the church, is the infinite diverſity of graces, communicated from him who is the head of it, to all the conſtituent parts. 'Tis the order and admirable proportions among them, 'tis the various degrees of glory ſhining and reflecting on all ſides round about it. — Laſtly, it was requiſite that GOD alone ſhould have *all the glory* of the beauty and perfection of the future world. This work, which infinitely excels all others, ought to be a work of pure *mercy*. It was not for creatures to glory in having any other part in it, than that which the *grace of Jeſus Chriſt* had given them. In a word, it was fit that GOD ſhould ſuffer all men to be *involved in ſin*, that he might ſhew them *mercy in Jeſus Chriſt*." F. MALEBRANCHE, *Concerning Nature and Grace*, Diſcourſe I. § 1, 3, 5, 6, 24. See alſo *Preſident* EDWARDS's *Hiſtory of Redemption*, p. 363—368. Edinb. 1774. And ROLLIN's *Ancient Hiſtory*, Vol. viii. *Concluſion*.

compariſon of which every other muſt be deemed inferior. Wherefore, GOD's *chief* end is *himſelf*, as far as he is capable of being ſought and attained, not by *mere* choice but *neceſſarily*. That is, to do otherwiſe would ſeem inconſiſtent with infinite rectitude.† Theſe remarks, I conceive, clearly eſtabliſh the diſtinction between an ultimate and a chief end. The former may be matter of choice and appointment, the latter not. Every chief is alſo an ultimate, but every ultimate is not a chief end. What

† "When we are conſidering with ourſelves, what would be "moſt fit and proper for GOD to have a chief reſpect to, in his "proceedings in general, with regard to the univerſality of "things, it may help us to judge of the matter with the greater "eaſe and ſatisfaction, to conſider what we can ſuppoſe would be "judged and determined by ſome *third* being of perfect wiſdom "and rectitude, neither the Creator nor one of the creatures, "that ſhould be perfectly indifferent and diſintereſted: or if we "make the ſuppoſition, that wiſdom itſelf, or infinitely wiſe juſtice "and rectitude, were a diſtinct diſintereſted perſon, whoſe office "it was to determine how things ſhall be moſt fitly and properly "ordered in the whole ſyſtem, or kingdom of exiſtence, includ-"ing king and ſubjects, GOD and his creatures; and upon a view "of the whole, to decide what regard ſhould prevail and govern "in all proceedings. Now ſuch a judge, in adjuſting the proper "meaſures and kinds of regard that every part of exiſtence is to "have, would weigh things in an even balance; taking care, that "greater or more exiſtence ſhould have a greater ſhare than leſs, "that a greater part of the whole ſhould be more looked at and "reſpected, than the leſſer in proportion (other things being "equal) to the meaſure of exiſtence, — that the more excellent "ſhould be more regarded than the leſs excellent: — ſo that the "*degree of regard* ſhould always be in a *proportion compounded* of "the proportion of *exiſtence*, and proportion of *excellence*, or ac-"cording to the degree of *greatneſs* and *goodneſs* conſidered *cu-*"*mulatively*.

What GOD *ultimately* aimed at in the human moral ſyſtem, was *the praiſe of redeeming grace*,* and what he *chiefly* aimed at was HIMSELF in the diſplays of his *equity*, and eſpecially of his *mercy*. What is *chief* is determined by *rectitude*, which is invariable; but what is *ultimate* is determined by *wiſdom*, which

 is

" *finally*. — Such an arbiter, in conſidering the ſyſtem of created " intelligent beings by itſelf, would determine, that the ſyſtem in " general, conſiſting of many millions, was of greater importance, " and worthy of a greater ſhare of regard, than only one indi- " vidual. For however conſiderable ſome of the individuals " might be, ſo that they might be much greater and better, and " have a greater ſhare of the ſum total of exiſtence than another " individual, yet no one exceeds others ſo much as to countervail " all the reſt of the ſyſtem. And if this judge conſider not only " the ſyſtem of created beings, but the ſyſtem of being in general, " comprehending the ſum total of univerſal exiſtence, both creator " and creature; ſtill every part muſt be conſidered according to " its weight and importance, or the meaſure it has of exiſtence " and excellence. To determine then what proportion of regard " is to be allotted to the Creator, and all his creatures taken " together, both muſt be as it were put in the balance; — the " *ſupreme Being*, with all in him that is great, conſiderable, and " excellent, is to be eſtimated and compared with all that is to be " found in the whole creation: and according as the former is " found to outweigh, in ſuch proportion is he to have a greater " ſhare of regard. — And in this caſe, as the whole ſyſtem of " created beings in compariſon of the Creator, would be found as " the light duſt of the balance, (which is taken notice of by him " that weighs) and as nothing and vanity; ſo the arbiter muſt " determine accordingly with reſpect to the degree in which GOD " ſhould be regarded by all intelligent exiſtence, and the degree " in which he ſhould be regarded in all that is done through the " whole

* Iſa. lx. 21. lxi. 3. Jer. xiii. 11. 2 Theſſ. i. 10—12. Phil. i. 10, 11. 1 Pet. iv. 11. 1 Cor. vi. 20. x. 30.

is no leſs diverſified in its divine ſource than are the poſſible plans in all-ſufficiency.

§ 7. It will now be aſked, How ſovereignty appears in fixing upon *the praiſe of glorious grace* in the ſalvation of the church, as the ultimate end of our moral ſyſtem? It appears from ſeveral conſiderations. Particularly,

1. The

" whole univerſal ſyſtem, in all actions and proceedings, determinations and effects whatever, whether creating, preſerving, uſing, diſpoſing, changing, or deſtroying. And as the Creator is infinite, and has all poſſible exiſtence, perfection and excellence, ſo he muſt have all poſſible regard. As he is every way the firſt and ſupreme, and as his excellency is in all reſpects the ſupreme beauty and glory, the original good, and fountain of all good; ſo he muſt have in all reſpects the ſupreme regard. And as he is GOD over all, to whom all are properly ſubordinate, and on whom all depend, worthy to reign as ſupreme head with abſolute and univerſal dominion; ſo it is fit that he ſhould be ſo regarded by all, and in all proceedings and effects through the whole ſyſtem: that univerſality of things in their whole compaſs and ſeries ſhould look to him, and reſpect him in ſuch a manner, as that reſpect to him ſhould reign over all reſpect to other things, and that regard to creatures ſhould univerſally be ſubordinate and ſubject.

" When I ſpeak of regard to be thus adjuſted in the univerſal ſyſtem, or ſum total of exiſtence, I mean the regard of the ſum total; not only the regard of individual creatures, or all creatures, but of all intelligent exiſtence, created and uncreated. For it is fit, that the regard of the Creator ſhould be proportioned to the worthineſs of objects, as well as the regard of creatures. Thus we muſt conclude ſuch an arbiter, as I have ſuppoſed would determine in this buſineſs, being about to decide how matters ſhould proceed moſt fitly, properly, and according to the nature of things. He would therefore determine, that the

" whole

1. The ultimate end *might* have been a diſplay of creating and preſerving goodneſs, in the happineſs of the ſyſtem. But *ſovereignty* determined, by leaving the creature in the hand of its own counſel, to manifeſt the *equitable* and *merciful* perfections of Deity, rather than mere ſupporting grace.

2. The ultimate end *might* have been a diſplay of mere equity in the total and final deſtruction of the ſyſtem. But a *ſovereign* hand fixed it otherwiſe; by eſtabliſhing a plan of recovering grace, there is glory to GOD in the higheſt, on earth peace, good-will towards men. GOD has a tribute of eternal

"whole univerſe, including all creatures animate and inanimate, "in all its actings, proceedings, revolutions, and entire ſeries of "events, ſhould proceed from a regard and with a view to *God*, as "the ſupreme and laſt end of all: that every wheel, both great "and ſmall, in all its rotations, ſhould move in a conſtant invari-"able regard to him as the ultimate end of all; as perfectly and "uniformly as if the whole ſyſtem were animated by one common "ſoul: or, as if ſuch an arbiter as I have before ſuppoſed, one "poſſeſſed of perfect wiſdom and rectitude, became the common "ſoul of the univerſe, and actuated and governed it in all its "motions.

"Thus have I gone upon the ſuppoſition of a *third* perſon, "neither Creator nor creature, but a diſintereſted perſon, ſtep-"ping in to judge of the concerns of both, and ſtate what is moſt "fit and proper between them. The thing ſuppoſed is impoſſi-"ble; but the caſe is nevertheleſs juſt the ſame as to what is "moſt fit and ſuitable in itſelf. For it is moſt certainly proper "for GOD to act, according to the greateſt *fitneſs* in his proceed-"ings, and he knows what the greateſt fitneſs is, as much as if "perfect rectitude were a diſtinct perſon to direct him." EDWARDS's *Diſſertation on God's laſt End in the Creation of the World*, p. 16—19. Edinb. 1788.

praiſe from fallen but redeemed ſinners, while theſe have an eternal portion of happineſs and holy reſt.

3. The ultimate end *might* have been greatly different in reſpect of the *numbers*, and the identical *perſons* to be ſaved. But *ſovereignty* ſays; "The decree was *wiſely* made—if ſome are more "favoured than others, none are injured." Well may we exclaim on the brink of this ocean, *O the depth!* *

* "However it be a foundation diſallowed of men, every obſerving chriſtian ſhall find, that without acknowledging Divine *ſovereignty* for the original, ſupreme and unaccountable diſpoſer of *perſons* and *things*, he ſhall want a principal means of ſupporting his faith, and quieting his underſtanding in the courſe of *common* providences; much more of thoſe myſterious occurrences, and *ſupernatural* truths which he is eternally concerned about.—To make of the ſame lump one veſſel to honour and another to diſhonour, is the ſublimeſt act and moſt apparent demonſtration of *ſovereign power* concerning men. The *reaſon* of which (and that to ſatisfaction) *might* have been given, and *would*, had it befitted the *greatneſs* of GOD, or the truſt and reverence we owe to him: but for the preſent he is pleaſed to give none other but that of his *right*; He may do *what he will with his own*. Rom. ix. 18." COLE's *Practical Diſcourſe on God's Sovereignty*, p. 1, 14. Edinb. 1788.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of the Sovereignty of Grace in the choice of MEANS to accompliſh the end propoſed.

§ 1. *How the propoſed end is proſecuted, and made infallibly certain.* § 2. *Firſt, God conducting himſelf towards the creature in ſtrict equity.* § 3. *Secondly, fixing on ſome, rather than others, as veſſels of mercy.* § 4. *A third mean, the choice of a Mediator.* § 5. *Fourthly, the decretive ſpeciality of Chriſt's mediation.* § 6. *The inſtances of ſovereignty in the choice of means, numberleſs.*

§ 1. EVERY ſyſtem may be conſidered under the twofold notion of *end* and *means*; and as we have conſidered the moral ſyſtem in reference to an *ultimate end*, and the influence of *ſovereignty* in the choice of it, we now proceed to conſider the ſame exalted attribute in reference to the *means* adopted for accompliſhing that end. The ultimate point to which the whole ſyſtem is deſtined to move, as we are aſſured from the higheſt authority, is *the praiſe of glorious grace in the ſalvation of the church*; but how is this to be effected? Redemption or ſalvation, implies a being *loſt*; but what *certainty* can there be of a *free* agent falling into a loſt condition, from which *mercy* may extricate him *to the praiſe of glorious redeeming grace?* If a *perfect free agent*, how is the defection *infallibly certain?*

which it *muſt* be in order to *ſecure* the ultimate end of the human moral ſyſtem. — Hence,

§ 2. The *firſt* inſtance of ſovereignty in the choice of means to accompliſh the high end of ſalvation, appears to be GOD's reſolution to conduct himſelf towards our moral ſyſtem, for a time, in *ſtrict equity*. Nothing elſe was neceſſary to render our defection from rectitude *infallibly certain*. Every *entity*, whether being or act, is from GOD as its efficient cauſe; all *paſſive power*, whether phyſical or moral, is from the creature; conſequently, ſuppoſing a non-communication of the former, or, which is the ſame thing, a non-prevention of the latter, on which we have no claim in equity, the creature's act terminates in defection.*

§ 3. A *ſecond* inſtance of ſovereignty in the choice of means, is the deſignation of *ſome* of the fallen human race as veſſels of mercy, in preference to others. To ſay that *all* are alike choſen decretively, is to ſay that there is *no election* at all; which is to contradict the whole tenor of ſcripture, and univerſal analogy. Beſides, if *all* are in themſelves loſt, and *none* decretively choſen to ſalvation, then none *are* or *can be* ſaved. But the vindication of this point is referred to the next chapter.

§ 4. A *third* inſtance of high ſovereignty, in ſubſerviency to the ſame end, is the choice and appointment of a *Mediator*. Mankind, having deviated from rectitude,

* See the profeſſed inveſtigation of the above ſentiments, Chap. IV. Sect. i. § 5, &c.

rectitude, their *equitable doom* was the ſuffering of natural evil in proportion to the defection. The difficulty in the way of pardon and reſtoration lay in the *honourable ſuſpenſion* of the penal conſequence. Wiſdom fixed on a *mediatorial* plan. By this method the divine law and equity were conſulted and their glory ſecured. Hereby GOD has declared his righteouſneſs, and ſhewn himſelf to be juſt while the juſtifier of him who is conſtituted one with the Saviour, not by works but by ſovereign grace. The mediation of Chriſt is ſo far from degrading the divine *benevolence*, that nothing can be conceived more expreſſive of it. It includes benevolence to the law, which is *magnified* and made honourable; to equity, which hereby is *declared*; and to every divine perfection, as well as to mankind. Hereby *God* COMMENDETH HIS LOVE *toward us, in that while we were yet ſinners,* CHRIST DIED *for us. He* SO LOVED *the world that he gave his only begotten Son. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one;* MUCH MORE *they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt.* In the redeeming plan, *according to the riches of his grace, he hath* ABOUNDED *toward us in all* WISDOM *and* PRUDENCE; in all long-ſuffering and loving-kindneſs, mercy and faithfulneſs, as well as love.

§ 5. A *fourth* inſtance appears in the *decretive ſpeciality* of Chriſt's mediation, whereby he not only procured ſuitable *means* for all, but alſo became a *ſurety* for the *application* of efficacious grace

grace to all eventually ſaved. The Meſſiah while procuring the *means* of ſalvation appears *partly* as the meſſenger of equitable government; but while raiſing the dead in ſin, pouring light into the mind, conviction into the conſcience, joy to the troubled heart, and vigour into the whole man, he ſeems to be *ſolely* the miniſter of ſovereign grace. In as much as *atonement* made for ſin contains only a part of ſalvation, the *fundamental* part indeed; the diſcriminative peculiarity of Chriſt's mediation includes the certainty of his *applying* that atonement in all its divine virtue. Thus redemption *eventually*, and therefore from *decretive intention*, is PARTICULAR; and thus the ſpeciality of the ſubſtitution flows from ſovereign pleaſure.

§ 6. Why ſhould I multiply inſtances of divine diſcrimination in the choice of means to attain the ultimate end of the human ſyſtem? Time would fail to enlarge on the Saviour's incarnation with all its attendant circumſtances of time, place, and humble appearance; his parentage, rank, and manner of life; the miracles he wrought, and the ſins he pardoned. Time would fail to enumerate the wonderful inſtances of his imputation of righteouſneſs, and impartance of life, to men who had been perſecutors, and women who had been proſtitutes; to ſhew where the ſins of the vileſt characters have abounded, and the grace of Chriſt hath much more abounded. Time would fail to declare in what wonderful inſtances the righteous have been preſerved in ſafety and happineſs, kept by the power of GOD,

GOD, and conducted triumphantly to glory. On a review of JEHOVAH's adorable ſovereignty in his conduct toward his people, we may ſay, as of old, "There is none like the GOD of Jeſhurun who "rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his "excellency on the ſky. The eternal GOD is thy "refuge, and underneath are the everlaſting arms; "and he ſhall thruſt out the enemy from before "thee; and ſhall ſay, Deſtroy them. Iſrael then "ſhall dwell in ſafety alone: the fountain of Ja-"cob ſhall be upon a land of corn and wine; alſo "his heaven ſhall drop down dew. Happy art "thou, O Iſrael: who is like unto thee, O people "ſaved by the Lord, the ſhield of thy help, and "who is the ſword of thy excellency! and thine "enemies ſhall be found liars unto thee; and thou "ſhalt tread upon their high places."*

* Deut. xxxiii. 26—29.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Containing an Examination of the fundamental principles of the Arminian System, particularly Dr. WHITBY's Discourse on the Five Points, and Mr. FLETCHER's controversial Writings.

SECT. I.

Whether a perfect moral agent, in a ſtate of original probation, has INHERENT power, according to Equity, to preſerve himſelf in a courſe of active unſinning obedience.

§ 1. *Introduction.* § 2. *Whitby's Preface reſpecting original ſin.* § 3. *Remarks on it,* § 4. *His conduct in claſſing the orthodox with the ancient Hereticks, and himſelf with the Fathers.* § 5—8. *The creature's abſolute dependence.* § 9, 10. *The origin of evil, what.* § 11. *No creature has inherent power to keep itſelf perfect, if dealt with according to ſtrict equity.* § 12—17. *Objections anſwered.* § 18, 19. *Corollaries.* § 20. *Recapitulation.*

§ 1. EVERY ſyſtem depends on ſome fundamental ſupport, and the *Arminian* ſyſtem ſeems to me to be ſupported principally by three pillars. (1) That

(1) That a moral agent, at leaſt when perfect, has a *power to do good* as well as evil *of himſelf.* (2) That the antiremonſtrant or Calviniſtic ſide of the diſputed points is inconſiſtent with *equity.* (3) That the *certainty,* (or, as they chooſe to expreſs it, the *neceſſity)* of future events is not conſiſtent with that *freedom* which is eſſential to moral agency. If theſe pillars are ſhaken, the anti-calviniſtic ſyſtem falls. Let us now, by impartial inveſtigation and fair argument, try their ſtrength.

§ 2. In the firſt of theſe pillars (which is the ſubject of the preſent Section) Dr. WHITBY muſt have placed great confidence, becauſe, though he does not ſo much defend it in form, a great part of his book is built upon it. And I own it appears to me not a little ſurpriſing that the learned Dr. GILL, in all his voluminous anſwer to WHITBY, does not once attempt to examine the ſentiment, but rather takes it for granted that Adam (though not his fallen poſterity) had "power to love, fear, and obey GOD," in an unqualified ſenſe.

Let us hear how Dr. WHITBY prefaces his work: "They who have known my education "may remember, that I was bred up ſeven years "in the Univerſity under men of the *Calviniſti-* "*cal* perſuaſion, and ſo could hear no other "doctrine or receive no other inſtructions from "the men of thoſe times, and *thereſore* had once "firmly

" firmly entertained all their doctrines." By the bye, we may remark that, independently of the illiberal inſinuation that the *univerſity men* of thoſe times *confined* their learned inſtructions and debates to one ſide of the queſtion, ſo as to keep the other out of ſight, we may juſtly queſtion the former Calviniſm of the Dr. from the reaſon he aſſigns for it. Becauſe he had no other inſtruction, *therefore* he firmly entertained it. It may be fairly ſuſpected that the orthodoxy of many other Doctors and Maſters, who afterwards quitted it, was no more than opinion taken upon truſt, in a ſimilar way, of ſubjects they never underſtood. He proceeds; " Now that which firſt moved me to ſearch into " the foundation of theſe doctrines, *viz. The* " *imputation of Adam's ſin to all his poſterity,* " was the ſtrange conſequences of it; this made " me ſearch more exactly into that matter. " —After ſome years ſtudy I met with one " who ſeemed to be a deiſt, and telling him " that there were arguments ſufficient to prove " the truth of chriſtian faith, and of the holy " ſcriptures, he ſcornfully replied, *Yes; and* " *you will prove your doctrine of the imputa-* " *tion of original ſin from the ſame ſcripture;* in- " timating that he thought that doctrine, if con- " tained in it, ſufficient to invalidate the truth and " the authority of the ſcripture. And by a little " reflection I found the ſtrength of his argument " ran thus: That the truth of holy ſcripture could " no otherwiſe be proved to any man that doubted " of it,

"it, but by reducing him to ſome abſurdity or "the denial of ſome avowed principle of reaſon. "Now this imputation of Adam's ſin to his poſ- "terity, ſo as to render them obnoxious to God's "wrath, and to eternal damnation, only becauſe "they were born of the race of Adam, ſeemed to "him as contradictory to the common reaſon of "mankind, as any thing could be, and ſo contained "as ſtrong an argument againſt the truth of ſcrip- "ture, if that doctrine was contained in it, as any "could be offered for it. And upon this account "I again ſearched into the places uſually alledged "to confirm that doctrine, and found them fairly "capable of other interpretations." †

§ 3. One cannot help wondering that a perſon of Dr. WHITBY's abilities ſhould be at a loſs to anſwer this deiſtical objection, without giving up the doctrine of original ſin. What is there in revelation, and *peculiar* to it, that the Doctor himſelf would call an *important* article, to which a Deiſt would not raiſe an objection equally plauſible? To anſwer objections by diſcarding every thing objected to by Deiſts, is not the way to defend but rather to betray the truth. The objection of a Deiſt, therefore, *(cæt. par.)* to the doctrine of original ſin, or any other ſcriptural doctrine, is impertinently adduced againſt it. Who would ever expect that perſons of deiſtical principles ſhould

† Dr. WHITBY's Diſcourſe on the Five Points. Pref. p. i, ii. N. B. I always refer in this Work to the *Second* Edition.

ſhould give their ſuffrage in favour of ſentiments becauſe maintained in ſcripture?

The above ſtatement implies, that if the orthodox doctrine of original ſin be not true, the *five points* which are maintained in that diſcourſe are eſſentially befriended. The critical conſideration of that doctrine operated as the main ſpring to the Doctor's laborious reſearches, and produced one conſiderable part of his celebrated performance; while the *ſuppoſition* of its falſehood emboldens the Arminian champion to inſult Calviniſm as *indefenſible*. But as the Author on whom I animadvert has not, in the treatiſe before me, thought proper to attack that doctrine in form, however advantageous to his cauſe the demolition of it might be; neither ſhall I, in replying to the fundamental principles of the Arminian ſyſtem, attempt a profeſſed defence of it.*

If by a fair inveſtigation it will be found a truth, that Adam in a ſtate of perfection had no *power* to do good without *ſovereign* aid, our Author's triumph on diſcarding original ſin, and GOD's decree, "De "non dando auxilium neceſſarium ad vitandum "peccatum," *of not affording help neceſſary to avoid ſin* to Adam's poſterity, is premature and empty. If the ſtate of Adam himſelf, before the fall, was ſuch as to favour our doctrine of ſovereign grace, much more is it inferible from that of his poſterity in every inſtance of converſion and final happineſs.

§ 4. Paſſing

* The inquiſitive reader will find this done, in a very maſterly manner, by Preſident EDWARDS, in his book entitled, *The great Chriſtian Doctrine of Original Sin defended*, &c. in reply to Dr. JOHN TAYLOR.

§ 4. Paſſing by the Doctor's ungenerous endeavour to claſs the orthodox with the "*Valentinians*, "*Marcionites*, *Baſilidians*, *Manichees*, *Priſcillianiſts*, and "other *Hereticks*," while he modeſtly places himſelf with the *Fathers** who wrote againſt them, as equally deſtitute of propriety, of candour, and of pertinency to the queſtion in diſpute, we ſhall proceed to a point of more radical importance. For what the primitive churches and Fathers *did* believe, is no ſtandard to us of what we *ought* to believe. It is at beſt but *argumentum ad verecundiam*, an argument fit only to overawe children, not *argumentum ad veritatem*, an appeal to the truth itſelf.

§ 5. Our poſition, then, is, that "a moral agent "in a ſtate of probation, according to *equity*, how-"ever perfect he may be, has *no inherent power* to "preſerve himſelf in a courſe of obedience;" from which, if eſtabliſhed, it will plainly follow, that great numbers of thoſe objections formed by *Arminian* writers, and Dr. WHITBY in particular, againſt the doctrines of grace as held by the reformed, muſt fall pointleſs to the ground, or elſe recoil upon themſelves.

One might think that a cloſe, impartial attention to one ſelf-evident principle, would ſoon lead us to

* In anſwer to that part of Dr. WHITBY's elaborate Treatiſe which relates to the Judgment of the Antient Chriſtian Church, or the ſenſe of the chriſtian writers of the firſt four centuries after Chriſt, and before AUSTIN, concerning Predeſtination, Redemption, Original Sin, Free-will, Efficacious Grace, and The Perſeverance of the Saints; ſee Dr. GILL's *Cauſe of God and Truth*, Part IV. *paſſim*.

the concluſion we mean to eſtabliſh; that is, "every creature is abſolutely, univerſally, and "neceſſarily *dependent* on the Creator." Thus the great FENELON, who was no enemy to *freedom*: "I am a dependent being. Independency is the ſupreme perfection. That which is by itſelf, muſt carry within itſelf the ſource and ſpring of its own being; or, which is the ſame thing, it muſt borrow or derive nothing from any other being different from itſelf. Suppoſe a being which collects in itſelf all the perfections you can conceive, but which, at the ſame time, has a borrowed and dependent exiſtence, you will ſtill find it to be leſs than another being, of which you have only the ſingle idea of bare independency. For there is no compariſon to be made betwixt a being that exiſts by itſelf, and a being which has nothing of its own, nothing but what it borrows; and which poſſeſſes itſelf, as it were, only upon truſt. — The will, or capacity of willing, is doubtleſs a degree of exiſtence, and of goodneſs, or perfection. But good will, or volition to good, and deſire after it, is another degree of ſuperior good. For one may abuſe the faculty of willing, by willing that which is evil; as to deceive, hurt, or do injuſtice: whereas good will is the good or right uſe of the will itſelf, which cannot but be good. There is nothing therefore ſo precious in man, as this good will, benevolence, or volition to good. It is this which ſets a value upon all his other faculties. — We have already ſeen that my will does not exiſt by itſelf, ſince it is ſubject to loſe, and to receive degrees of good, or perfection. We have

have ſeen, that it is a good inferior to good will; becauſe it is better to will that which is good, than barely to have a will ſuſceptible both of good and evil. How is it poſſible to believe that I, a weak, imperfect, borrowed, and dependent being, can beſtow on myſelf the higheſt degree of perfection, while it is evident, that the inferior degree is derived to me from a firſt exiſtence? Can I imagine that GOD gives me the leſſer good, and that without him I give myſelf the greater? Where ſhould I obtain that high degree of perfection, in order to beſtow it on myſelf? Could I procure it from nothing, which is the whole of my own ſtock? Shall I ſay, that other ſpirits equally imperfect with mine, communicate it unto me? But ſince thoſe limited and dependent beings cannot, any more than my ſelf, give to themſelves any one thing; much leſs can they beſtow any thing on another. Not being ſelf-exiſtent, they have not of themſelves any true power, either over me, over thoſe things that are imperfect in me, or over themſelves. It is neceſſary therefore, without ſtaying to look at them, to aſcend higher, and find out a firſt, all-prolific, all-powerful cauſe, who is able to beſtow on my ſoul that good volition which ſhe has not in herſelf.

"Let us here add another reflection. That firſt being is the cauſe of all the modifications of his creatures. The operation, to ſpeak in the language of philoſophers, follows the exiſtence. A being in its own nature dependent, muſt be ſo in all its operations. That which is acceſſory, is a conſequence of the principal. The author of their eſſence, therefore, is

alſo the author of all the modifications or modes of exiſtences in his creatures. Thus GOD is the real and immediate cauſe of all the configurations, combinations, and motions of all the bodies in the univerſe. He hath ſet one body in motion, and by means of that he gives motion to another. It is he who created all things, and whoſe power ſtill operates in all his works. Now volition is the modification of the will, juſt as motion is the modification of bodies. Shall we affirm, that GOD is the real, immediate, and entire cauſe of the motion of all bodies, and deny that he is equally the real and immediate cauſe which actuates the will to what is good? Shall this modification, the moſt excellent of all, be the only one not wrought by GOD in his own work? Shall the work beſtow this on itſelf, independently of its Author? Who can entertain ſuch a thought? My volition to good, which I had not yeſterday, and which I have to-day, is not therefore a thing which I beſtow on myſelf. It came from him who gave me the faculty of willing, and even my very exiſtence. As volition is a greater perfection than bare exiſtence; ſo to will that which is good, is a greater perfection than ſimply to will. The conſequent operation of power, when it proceeds to a virtuous act, is the greateſt of all human perfections. Power is only a balance, a beam in equilibre betwixt virtue and vice, a mere ſuſpenſion betwixt good and evil. The progreſs or paſſage to the act, is a determination to the ſide of good, and conſequently to that good which is ſuperior. The power ſuſceptible of good

and

and evil proceeds from God: this is what we have proved beyond all poſſibility of a doubt. Shall we now affirm, that the deciſive ſtroke, the operation that determines to the greater good, does not proceed from him, or proceeds leſs from him than the bare power? All that we have ſaid evidently concurs with thoſe words of the apoſtle, that *God works* in us both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure. — The image of the divine independence, is not really that independency which it only repreſents. My liberty is but a ſhadow of the liberty of the firſt being, by whom I exiſt, and by whom I act. On the one hand, the power I have of willing what *is evil*, is not ſo much a true power, as a weakneſs and frailty inſeparable from my will: for it is only a power to fall, to degrade myſelf, and to diminiſh my degree of perfection and exiſtence. On the other hand, the power I have to will what is good, is not an abſolute power, ſince I have it not of myſelf. Therefore, as liberty is nothing more than power, a borrowed power can conſtitute only a borrowed and dependent liberty. A being ſo imperfect, and ſo little his own, cannot be otherwiſe than dependent." *

§ 6. If this reaſoning be juſt, and I have no doubt that to every impartial mind it muſt appear ſo, it is obvious to remark, that it is applicable, not merely to man in his *preſent* ſtate, but alſo in his ſtate of primæval rectitude; and indeed to every created being however exalted. Creation is a tranſit from

* Demonſtration of the Exiſtence of God. Sect. lxiii—lxv, lxix.

nothing to a degree of poſitive good. Yet every creature, it is almoſt ſelf-evident, has, in ſtrict propriety of ſpeech, only a *paſſive power*, and participates more of nothing than of any thing poſitive and active. And ſuch is the univerſality of this truth that it applies no leſs to the moſt glorious ſeraph than to the meaneſt reptile. The dependence of the creature on the Creator is abſolute and univerſal in its eſſence and being, in all its good properties and qualities, deſires and volitions. It is to God the creature owes its will to good, which is natural; but much more its virtuous volitions, becauſe a higher degree of excellence. The creature's power to act is from God; even all its natural actions proceed from his efficiency; how much more all virtuous and holy actions! Should any ſay that the actions of an inſect are from God, but thoſe of an exalted intelligence from himſelf, he would but render the abſurdity more glaring, and increaſe the contradiction. We may ſafely and unreſervedly aſſert, that Adam never exerciſed a good volition, deſire, or thought, but as God *immediately* enabled him. This being a point of the greateſt importance in Theology, we ſhould not ſlightly paſs it over; and leſt my ſentiments ſhould appear novel to thoſe who have read but little on the ſubject, or whoſe reading has been partial, I ſhall make no apology for expreſſing my thoughts again in the language of others.

§ 7. Thus then the eminently learned and pious THEOPHILUS GALE: "Dependence on God for being,

being, life, and motion, is eſſential to every creature as ſuch: for all creatures receiving whatever they have *by participation from God*, it thence neceſſarily follows, that they depend on him for all. — An independent being, is that which needs not any other being eſſentially precedent to itſelf, as the cauſe of its being and operation. — Whatever is *dependent* is *Ens* or *being* by participation, finite, potential, contingent, and defectible. Every dependent is *ens* by *participation*. For whatever is not being by eſſence and independently, muſt neceſſarily be ſuch by participation: where there is not ſelf-being, there muſt be a reception of being from ſome other, which connotes participation. Whatever is dependent is alſo *finite* and limited, both in being, virtue, and operation. Whatever is dependent is finite in *being*; becauſe its being is by participation, and according to communication of the ſuperior cauſe. Every dependent is alſo finite in *virtue and efficacy*: for whatever is limited in its *eſſence* muſt neceſſarily alſo be limited in its virtue and efficacy. Hence every dependent is alſo finite in its *operation*: for the ſphere of *activity* cannot be larger than the ſphere of *eſſence*: if the principle be limited, the operation cannot but be limited. Whatever is dependent is alſo *potential*. To explicate and demonſtrate this attribute of a dependent being we muſt conſider, that nothing is *pure act*, but the firſt moſt ſimple *independent being*: no creature is pure actuality: where there is dependence, there is ſomewhat of potentiality or *paſſive power*, either phyſic or metaphyſic. All *matter* hath a *phyſic* paſſive power,

or natural poſſibility of being corrupted: ſpirits have not a *phyſic* paſſive power, or natural principle of corruption, yet they have a *metaphyſic* paſſive power of being annihilated, or caſt back into their primitive nothing. Beſides the *natural power*, which a dependent being has, there is an *obediential power* appendant to its nature. For the explication of which we are to know, that it is eſſential to a created being to be ſubject and ſubordinate to the firſt, increated and independent Being ſo far, as to obey it in receiving all impreſſions, and acting under it whatſoever implies not a contradiction. — Hence, every dependent being is *contingent*. For whatever has any paſſive or obediential power, is obnoxious to the ſovereign pleaſure and concourſe of its firſt cauſe, to which it owes abſolute obedience, even to annihilation. Hence, every dependent being is *defectible*. For as it is eſſential to the firſt independent Being to be indefectible; ſo alſo to all ſecond dependent beings to be defectible. The ſupreme GOD being (αὐτοῶν καὶ αὐταρκης,) *ſelf-being*, and *ſelf-ſufficient*, a pure ſimple act, without the leaſt matter or paſſive power, it is impoſſible that he ſhould ever fail in any thing: but every creature being *ens*, or *being*, *by participation*, and ſo compoſed of *ſomething and nothing*, or of act and paſſive power, it cannot be but that it ſhould be *defectible*, or apt to fail, which is the root of its dependence.

" The root and origin of all creatural dependence is the creature's paſſive power, and GOD's abſolute dominion over it:

1. *The*

1. " *The creature's paſſive power.* For the explication whereof we are to conſider, that all creatures, being educed by GOD out of *nothing*, ſtill retain a tincture or mixture of their *primitive nothing*: ſo that no creature can be ſaid to be *pure being*: for this is an attribute *peculiar* to the firſt independent being. — Every creature has ſomething of *nothing* contempered with its *being*; yea more of nothing than of being, which makes it obnoxious to *limitation*, *contingence*, *mutability*, *defectibility*, and *dependence*. — This *nihility* or nothingneſs of the creature is the ſame with its *paſſive power* either phyſic or metaphyſic; natural or obediential; whereby it is limited, and confined to ſuch or ſuch a degree of *entity*, *exiſtence*, and *operation*. — So that all *dependence* ariſeth from nihility, paſſive power, and limitation of the creature.

2. " *God's abſolute dominion.* For all creatures having been educed, by the omnipotent power of GOD, out of nothing, and inveſted only with a finite, limited being, compoſed of *ſomething and nothing*, or act and paſſive power, hence it neceſſarily follows, that all are ſubject to the abſolute dominion of their Creator, and *impedible*, according to his pleaſure. Wherever there is paſſive power, there is impedibility: there is nothing (ανεμποδιστος) *unimpedible* but GOD, who is *pure act* and *Lord of all.* GOD has abſolute dominion over his creature for all uſes that imply not a contradiction. This plenary and abſolute dominion of GOD appertains to his infinite omnipotence and ſupremacy, as the firſt cauſe of all things: for no dominion is complete and perfect, unleſs

unleſs it include a power of all poſſible uſe. May we eſteem that a perfect dominion, which has not an abſolute diſpoſal of all under its dominion? And to this abſolute dominion of GOD muſt there not correſpond an abſolute ſubjection in the creature? Are not theſe two correlates? And doth not this abſolute ſubjection of the creature to GOD, ſpeak its abſolute dependence on GOD? Is it poſſible that any creature made by GOD ſhould be exempted from his abſolute dominion? And doth not abſolute dependence on GOD neceſſarily follow hence? Neither doth this abſolute dependence on GOD regard only the *Eſſence* and conſervation of the creature, but alſo all its *operations:* for otherwiſe the creature were (ανεμποδιστος) *unimpedible*, which is againſt the law of creation and dependence. Thus every created being is under the abſolute dominion of GOD, both as to its *eſſence*, *exiſtence*, *activity*, and *operation:* GOD can deprive it of each of theſe as he pleaſeth, yea, reduce it to its firſt nothing. Hence *dependence* on GOD as to each of theſe is *eſſential* to every creature.

" Is not every creature *multiform*, *mutable*, and *defectible?* And muſt not every multiform, mutable, and defectible being be reduced to ſome *uniform*, *immutable*, and *indefectible Being*, as the original principle of its dependence? Is there not a natural levity and vanity in every creature, which renders it fluxible, variable and inconſtant? Was it not a great and moſt true ſaying of HERACLITUS, *that all things are in flux or motion?* Do not all this then need ſome firſt being and cauſe to *fix* their beings and motions?

Again,

Again, doth not every *potential being* need ſome *pure act*, to actuate the ſame? And is not every creature a *potential being* which needs GOD, the moſt ſimple *pure act*, to actuate the ſame? Doth not every *recipient*, as recipient, need the active influx of that principle from which it receives all? And is not every creature a mere paſſive recipient as to GOD, who is the firſt influential cauſe of its *exiſtence*, *motion*, and *all*? Yea, is not every creature a mere paſſive *inſtrument* in regard of the divine influx? Can it *ſubſiſt* or *act* without divine concourſe? — Creatural *dependence* is not really diſtinct from the *eſſence* of the creature. That the creature's *dependence* is not really diſtinct from its *eſſence* is evident; becauſe every creature being *ens by participation*, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that dependence on the firſt cauſe, from whom it participates of being, is moſt *eſſential* to it. As it is eſſential to the firſt cauſe to be Being by *eſſence*, and ſo independent; ſo it is alſo eſſential to the ſecond cauſe to be being by *participation*, and ſo dependent: ſo that the very notion and idea of a creature doth *inſeparably*, *eſſentially*, and *formally* include dependence on GOD, as that which is really not diſtinct therefrom.

" Every creature depends on GOD as to *operation*. — For operation is the *index* of the eſſence: what is dependent in eſſence cannot be independent in operation. Let us conſider the ſeries of cauſes, and we ſhall find that every inferior is obedient and ſubordinate to its ſuperior in acting. What is an *action* but that ſpecial dependence, which the effect has on its efficient cauſe? And is not GOD the prime Efficient

Efficient of all things? No virtue or efficacy of any ſecond cauſe can actuate itſelf, but neceſſarily requires for its actuation the divine concourſe, which gives all virtue, as alſo the conſervation and actuation of the ſaid virtue. The *virtue* of the inferior agent always *depends* on the virtue of the ſuperior, inaſmuch as the ſuperior *gives* virtue to the inferior, as alſo the conſervation and actuation of the ſame virtue. Whatever is *limited* in its eſſence is alſo limited in its activity and operation: and where there is *limitation* there is ſubordination and dependence, as well in *operation* as in eſſence. If every ſecond cauſe depend not on its firſt for all its *operations*, then it is impoſſible that the firſt cauſe ſhould hinder ſuch operations, for the exerting of which the ſecond cauſe depends not on him." *

§ 8. From this profound and very valuable writer much more to the ſame purpoſe might be added, but the above may ſuffice. I ſhall next produce, in reference to the ſame point, the ſentiments of one who certainly was not averſe to *liberty* and *moderation*. Hear, then, Mr. RICHARD BAXTER:

" As all being is originally from GOD, ſo there is a continued divine cauſation of them, [the creatures] without which they would all *ceaſe*, or be annihilated: which ſome call a continued creation, and ſome an emanation, and ſome a continued action, or operation *ad rerum eſſe*. And it is an intolerable error to hold that GOD hath made the world, or *any part* of it, ſelf-ſufficient, or independent as to himſelf,

* Court of the Gentiles, Part IV. Book II. ch. ii. *paſſim*.

ſelf, as to *being*, *action*, or *perfection*. We grant therefore that all the world is ſo far united to GOD, as to *depend* on his *continued cauſality*: and that the beams do not more depend on the ſun, or light, heat, and motion on the ſun and other fire, nor the branches, fruit, and leaves more depend on the tree, than the creature on GOD.—But yet theſe are no parts of GOD, as the fruit and leaves are of the tree, and as the beams are of the ſun: but they are creatures, becauſe GOD's emanation or *cauſation* is *creative*, cauſing the whole being of the effect.*—It is confeſſed that there is no ſubſtance which GOD is not the maker of (beſides himſelf); nor any *action* of which he is not the *firſt cauſe*. GOD may well be called the perfect *firſt cauſe* of human actions, in that he giveth man all his natural faculties, and a *power to act* or not act at this time, or to chooſe this or that, and as the fountain of nature and life and motion, doth afford his *influx* neceſſary to this free agency. So that whenever any act is done, as an act *in genere*, GOD is the firſt cauſe of it: for it is done by the power which he giveth and continueth, and by his *vital influx*; and there is no *power* uſed to produce it which is not given by God."† "Human (and all created) power is dependent, and is not properly a power to do any thing, but on ſuppoſition of GOD's emanant ſupport and concourſe, as he is the firſt cauſe of nature. ‡ I conclude with this repeated profeſſion, that I am fully ſatisfied, that all the reſt of the controverſies, about grace and nature,

* Chatholic Theology, Part III. p. 113.
† *Ibid.* Part I. p. 27. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 37.

ture, predeſtination and redemption, as they ſtand between the ſynod of *Dort* and the *Arminians*, are of no greater moment than I have oft expreſſed in this book—and that the TRUE LIFE of all the remaining difficulties, is, in this controverſy, between the defenders of *neceſſary predetermination*, and [thoſe] of *free-will*; that is, (not, What free-will *ſinners* have left, but) *Whether ever in angels or innocent man, there was ſuch a thing, as a will that can and ever did* DETERMINE ITSELF *to a volition or nolition* in ſpecie morali, *without the predetermining, efficient, neceſſitating* PRE-MOTION *of God as the firſt cauſe?*" *

The reader will obſerve that I have not, in the above quotations, availed myſelf of AUGUSTINE and the *Fathers*, AQUINAS and the *Schoolmen*, CALVIN and the *Reformers*, HARTLEY and *modern* Metaphyſicians and divines; but the authors I have fixed upon are perhaps the leaſt exceptionable that could be ſelected; being not only eminent in piety, diſtinguiſhed for their acuteneſs and zeal in the inveſtigation of divine truth, and their extenſive acquaintance with the metaphyſical ſentiments of others that went before them, but alſo of different religious perſuaſions. However, I produce them not as *authorities*; I only expreſs myſelf in the words of men who were thus qualified to form their opinions, who were at the head of no party, who apparently had no intereſt to ſerve but that of truth, but whoſe learning and moderation are univerſally acknowledged.

With

* *Ibid.* p. 118.

With the concluding remark of the laſt of theſe writers I fully accord. The *true life* of the difficulty in thoſe controverſies that have ſo long ſubſiſted in the church, and which go now under the names of *Calviniſtic* and *Arminian* ſentiments, is this: *viz.* What is the REAL power of a perfect accountable creature, as diſtinguiſhed from a *borrowed* or *concurring* power? To ſay, that Adam's power conſiſted in the *liberty* of chooſing what appeared to his underſtanding to be good, and refuſing what appeared evil, and of acting accordingly; does not *ſolve* the difficulty, but rather *change* the ſituation of it. For the power here aſcribed to Adam is only a *borrowed* power; the reſult of a *fixed law*, that the will ſhould follow the dictates of the underſtanding, which is as much the effect of a *borrowed* power as any thing done by man can be. Granting, then, that man has the fixed invariable *concurrence* of divine power, (which is the utmoſt he can have in this matter,) to *chooſe* or to *refuſe* what the intellect repreſents as *good* or *evil*; the difficulty ſtill returns, How came the intellect of a *perfect* creature to make an *erroneous* repreſentation of any object? In other words, *What is the* ORIGIN *of moral evil?*

§ 9. In anſwer to a queſtion of ſuch difficulty and importance, I deſire not only to preſerve all due reverence towards my Maker, but alſo to ſubmit to the intelligent reader the reſult of my inquiries with becoming deference. My concluſion then is, that "*the* ORIGIN *of all moral evil* muſt be referred to *that* DEFECTIBILITY *which is eſſential*

eſſential to every created nature, when left in the hand of ſtrict equity to the excluſion of all ſovereign preventing acts." Or, "*moral evil flows infallibly from the* HYPOTHETICAL NATURE OF THINGS, *if not ſovereignly prevented.*" And it appears to me that the truth of my concluſion is ſupported by ſufficient reaſons deduced both *a priori* and *a poſteriori*. To begin with the *former*, let it be obſerved;

1. There is but one *independent* Being in the univerſe; who is *pure act*, unimpedible, and indefectible. This Being, whom we call GOD, is the *firſt Cauſe*, and the *laſt end* of all created exiſtence. Whereas it is eſſential to every creature to have an *imperfect exiſtence* compared with his; which imperfection includes, among other things, *abſolute dependence*, in eſſence, exiſtence, good qualities, (for bad ones have no efficient cauſe) activity, and operation; and conſequently ſuch a dependent being exiſts and acts only by *participation*. From whence it follows that all the good it poſſeſſes, the good of exiſtence, of virtuous and happy exiſtence, of true conceptions, of commendable volitions, and a holy diſpoſition, proceed entirely from the firſt cauſe. That is, *all good proceeds from God.*

2. All that is requiſite to conſtitute any perfect being accountable is, a *capacity* to enjoy the chief good, ſuitable *means* for ſecuring it, with *freedom* to ſin or not to ſin. If you require any thing more, you require indefectibility, and therefore independence; which is abſurd and impoſſible. Adam, therefore, had a CAPACITY to enjoy GOD in rectitude, which capacity implies an *intellect* to repreſent, and a

will

will to chooſe good. But though the will follows the repreſentation made, by a fixed law inſeparable from intelligent beings, yet the intellect itſelf neither is nor can be made indefectible in its own nature; for that would be the ſame as to make an *independent creature*, which is a contradiction. If the will did not *always* chooſe the greateſt *apparent good*, then it may happen that evil may ſometimes be choſen *as evil*, which would lead to conſequences too abſurd and monſtrous to be mentioned. And yet, becauſe the *intellect* is not by any fixed law infallibly connected with the *truth*, or exactly proportioned *real good* of the objects preſented to it, (for if it were ſo connected it would be indefectible, which is abſurd in its principle; and moral evil would be impoſſible, which is contrary to fact,) it follows, that though Adam had ſuitable MEANS of happineſs, they could not poſſibly *enſure* his perfection. When therefore I ſay that Adam was FREE not only *to ſin*, but alſo *not to ſin*, my meaning is, that he was *not impelled* by any decree, concurrence, phyſical or moral influence of GOD to commit ſin. In Adam's firſt ſinful *act* (as in every ſinful act whatever) there was ſomething of entity, ſomething to which GOD concurred, of which he was the efficient cauſe; and there was a ſomething which was *ſinful*, to which GOD did not concur, and of which he was not the efficient. Sin therefore, if traced to its ultimate and true *origin*, muſt appear to proceed (not from GOD in any reſpect, but) from *the hypothetical nature of things*. Adam's defection, in its

formal *nature*, was a tranſgreſſion of the law, the line of rectitude; but the *ſource* of it was a tendency to defection eſſential to every created nature, and which mere equity could not prevent. From hence it follows, that *all evil is from ourſelves*.

§ 10. I ſhall next offer an argument in ſupport of my concluſion, deduced *a poſteriori*. I will not appeal to ſcripture language which aſcribes all good to GOD as its original, and all ſin to ourſelves; to the ſentiments of angels who never ſinned, or the inhabitants of deſpair; I appeal to the reader himſelf when in his moſt thoughtful and ſerious moments. If a perſon of ſound mind, and a virtuous diſpoſition, he will undoubtedly acquieſce in the following language: "I am what I am by unmerited favour. Whatever good Adam poſſeſſed or performed I aſcribe to GOD, and not to him; except as GOD's inſtrument. Much more do I refer all the good found in, and done by any of his poſterity to that ſource. I am nothing, I have nothing, I did nothing *truly good* but as actuated or ſupplied by *ſovereign favour*. Not unto me, O GOD, not unto me, but to thy great and glorious name be all the praiſe. Thou, and thou alone, art worthy to receive the glory and honour and thanks. Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, but not myſelf, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing. I would join with every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and

" and all that are in them, ſaying, Bleſſing, and " honour, and glory, and power (not to *myſelf* " in any degree, but) unto him that ſitteth upon " the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. " —On the other hand, GOD never impelled any " to ſin. If angels and men fell, they have them- " ſelves alone to blame. GOD *could* have prevented " their fall, without deſtroying their liberty, by " ſovereign phyſical acts on their *natures*, whereby " the intellect might be conſtantly enlightened, " and the will cleave with delight to the good ſo re- " preſented; this he *does* to angels and glorified " ſaints, and what he does to them he could have " done to others. But if thoſe who ſtand, ſtand by " *favour*; thoſe who fell, fell by *equity*. Behold " the ſovereign goodneſs and the equitable ſeverity " of GOD! As the fall of angels and our firſt " parents was of themſelves, ſo every ſin I ever " committed was *ſolely* from myſelf. GOD has " given me a *capacity* of enjoying himſelf, an *un-* " *derſtanding* to know, and a *will* to love him; but " in many inſtances I have departed from the foun- " tain of living waters, and hewn to myſelf broken " ciſterns that can hold no water, exchanged the " chief for a partial and inferior good. I take the " blame always to *myſelf*; to myſelf it *entirely* " belongs. Were I cut down and caſt off to ſuffer " the torments of hell, and that forever, it would " be but *equitable*; that I am not there *now*, is the " effect of ſovereign grace; and if I am ever " placed in a ſtate of permanent happineſs in " heaven, I ſhall aſcribe it wholly and eternally to

" the ſame bleſſed adorable cauſe." If this is the language of truth and ſoberneſs, the real experience of a well-informed and well-affected mind, my concluſion is juſtified by it, that while *all good is from God, all ſin is from the creature*; that is, from its own *eſſential defectibility*, and therefore the *hypothetical nature of things*, permitted to operate without a ſovereign prevention.

§ 11. From the premiſes it follows, that the creature's *power to ſin* is properly and really *its own*, as oppoſed to GOD's concurrence; for when every thing which is GOD's is abſtracted from the ſinful act, the remainder (which is only ſin) is the creature's own. And it alſo follows, that the creature's *power to act well* is not properly and really its own but *borrowed*. Without GOD's immediate act upon the creature to ſupport its nature and diſpoſition from moral defection, its intellect and will from miſimproving means, as well as its exiſtence from recurring to nihility, it can *do nothing* morally good. Properly ſpeaking, therefore, Adam was not the author of his perfection and continuance therein but the *inſtrument* of GOD; whereas he was in the ſtricteſt ſenſe the *author* of his defection, there being no cauſe whatever out of himſelf for its exiſtence. To refer ſin to GOD as its author or efficient cauſe is abſolutely impoſſible, if by ſin we mean any thing that is bad; but ſin is truly bad, becauſe the very oppoſite to holineſs. As the latter is the greateſt beauty, ſo the former is the greateſt deformity in the univerſe. The one is pure light, the other foul darkneſs; the one is health and the

ſource

ſource of happineſs, the other is diſeaſe and the ſource of miſery; the one leads to heaven and the other to hell. To ſay therefore that GOD is the author of ſin, is the ſame as to ſay it is not ſin; for were he the author of it, in the ſame ſenſe that he is the author of holineſs, it would ceaſe to be evil, which is contradictory.

By this account it muſt appear, that ſince Adam's power *to ſin* was really his *own*, and his power of *acting well* was *borrowed*; his *power of not ſinning* is, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, a certain mere *point*, an even *balance*, a *medium* or *neutrality* between a phyſical impulſe to ſin, and a power of acting well. And the *power* of not receding from this point, of not preponderating to moral evil, of not deviating from this medium or neutrality to the ſide of diſobedience, is in reality *borrowed*, and poſſeſſed during the ſovereign pleaſure of GOD; and it is *ours* in no higher ſenſe than as it is not infringed upon by any poſitive act on GOD's part. Thus our *exiſtence*, as *creatures* only, is a power, not real but derived; to continue it requires perpetual cauſation from GOD, but to annihilate it requires no poſitive act. And thus the *perfect exiſtence* of Adam, as *accountable*, was a power, not real but derived; to continue it required a perpetual cauſation from GOD, but in order to loſe it no poſitive act on the part of GOD was neceſſary.

§ 12. But "if Adam had no *real* power, which may be called properly *his own*, how can it be ſaid that he was under *obligation to love God* with all his

heart?" He had all that could in *equity* be required; he had a *capacity* of enjoying the chief good, and was put in abſolute poſſeſſion of it; he had *means* both ſuitable and ſufficient to preſerve that poſſeſſion, obligations and means being correlates; and he had *freedom* on the one hand to tranſgreſs, when ſet on the exact balance of trial, and on the other he was not impelled to tranſgreſs by any thing *on the part of God*; by any decree, active will, interference, premotion, influence, concurrence, or any cauſe whatever. What elſe can an accountable creature claim as its due? To *love God* with all his heart, was to keep poſſeſſion of the good he enjoyed, and to this end he had all neceſſary *moral means* (the only ones that could be equitably demanded) to induce him. If he had no *active power* of himſelf to enſure his perfection, it was becauſe he was not an *independent* being. And yet, he had not only a *paſſive power* of defection and tranſgreſſion, but alſo an *obediential power*, whereby he was capacitated to receive ability from ſovereign favour to obey the law.

§ 13. Again, "if *active power* be incompatible with abſolute dependence, which is eſſential to every creature, with what propriety may any *good acts* be called *ours?*" The act itſelf, conſidered in its formal nature, may very well be called *ours*, becauſe *we* love, fear, repent, or believe; though GOD's premotion be the efficient cauſe. An act (and the ſame remark applies to the *ſtate* of the mind) is good or bad, not from its *cauſe*, but its formal *nature*. Therefore, to *love* GOD is *good* irreſpective of

of the efficient cauſation; and *vice verſa*. Yet, the free agent is under obligation of gratitude not to himſelf but to the efficient cauſe. Though the act be *his*, it was GOD enabled him *both to will and do of his own good pleaſure*.

On the contrary, if he *act amiſs*, the act *itſelf* is *morally bad*, irreſpectively of the *cauſe*; the cauſe is a deficient one, originating in himſelf alone. Therefore to ſay, that it is a *hardſhip* for one to ſuffer natural evil (the neceſſary effect of moral evil) becauſe he has no real active power of his own to keep the line of rectitude, is to rebel againſt the hypothetical *nature of things*, and to deſtroy the diſtinction between *Creator* and *creature*. To vindicate the divine character, it is enough that the probationer is not *forced* to tranſgreſs. How much more becoming a created exiſtence is this language, "Hold thou me up and I ſhall be ſafe!" Proud diſſatisfaction with the nature of things is the very eſſence of rebellion, and was *probably* "the condemnation of the devil." To ſay, that in the caſe of a perfect probationer there was a *chance* of his continuing to *act aright* as well as to act amiſs, is an attempt to hide our ignorance under the veil of unmeaning words; for to *act well*, is no more the effect of *chance* than the *agent himſelf* is the effect of it. And to aſcribe ſuch a good effect to any thing ſhort of GOD as the original premotive unmerited cauſe, is contrary to all juſt conceptions of creaturely dependence.

§ 14. Some may be ready to object: "If a moral

ſyſtem can exiſt on no other condition, what is there deſirable in ſuch a ſyſtem?" *Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto* comparative *diſhonour?* If there were no moral ſyſtem, the glorious attribute of *equity* could never be *exerciſed.* And yet, if the attribute of *mere* equity be exerciſed and made manifeſt, ſuch is the creature's paſſive power, that the ſyſtem muſt needs be deranged.* If therefore equity be a glorious attribute, and if moral imperfection be the certain conſequence of its diſplay, goodneſs and wiſdom ſeem to require, in ſome inſtances, the interpoſition of ſovereignty: for it appears repugnant to our beſt ideas of goodneſs and wiſdom (which, if we form any ſentiments at all, we muſt follow) to ſuppoſe, that the diſplay of one attribute ſhould inevitably terminate, as that of mere equity would, in the miſery of the creature, without any *poſſibility* of preventing its operation: but this prevention, it is demonſtrable, can be effected only by ſovereign grace. Whence it muſt appear to every unprejudiced mind, that a moral ſyſtem exiſting on this condition and in theſe circum-

* "Without having recourſe to any ill *genius* or *dæmon*, we may fairly and ſolidly account for the *origin of evil*, from the poſſibility of a various uſe or application of our liberty; even as that capacity or poſſibility itſelf is ultimately founded on the *defectibility* and *finiteneſs* of a created nature." DITTON, on the Reſurrection, p. 427, Edit. 1727.

circumſtances, is the moſt wonderful and glorious part of all creation.

§ 15. "Might not the inconvenience of moral evil have been prevented by a poſitive decree to the contrary?" No decree could alter the *abſtract nature of things*, becauſe no decree could alter the *nature of God* on which they are founded; and the following *hypothetical nature of things*, or connection of cauſes and effects, in reference to the preſent ſubject, I apprehend amounts to a plain demonſtration: If God create any being, that being muſt be abſolutely dependent; if he ſhew his equity *ad extra*, unattended with ſovereign aids, the creature muſt fail to produce actions morally good; if this deviation from rectitude take place, natural evil (conſiſting in the *loſs* of the chief good, and a *conſciouſneſs* of that loſs) muſt enſue, without a miraculous prevention; if this being, having once offended, be reſtored, it muſt be effected by ſovereign mercy and grace. So that, in effect, the import of the objection is, whether the ſame thing can *be* and *not be* at the ſame time? It was undoubtedly a matter of ſovereign pleaſure with God either to form a ſyſtem or not, and one ſyſtem rather than another; but to ſuppoſe that mere pleaſure and appointment could conſtitute and effect a contradiction is abſurd. However, we muſt ſay that the exiſtence of moral evil is only *hypothetically* neceſſary. If *equity* and *mercy* be diſplayed, moral evil muſt not be prevented. It is therefore granted that moral evil might have been prevented by a poſitive decree to the contrary; but

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at the expenſe of eternally concealing the glorious attributes juſt mentioned, and the plan of redeeming grace, which in its contrivance, execution, and effects, will be the ſubject of everlaſting admiration. Our buſineſs ſhould be not to cavil at the ways of JEHOVAH, as if they were not equal, but to humble ourſelves under his mighty hand; to thirſt after the water of the river of life, that iſſues from under the throne of mercy. This would cure our fever; ſet our hearts at eaſe; enlighten our eyes, and ſlay our enmity. *If ſin abounds, grace doth much more abound.*

§ 16. It may be again objected, "If Adam was not impelled to ſin, and had no power of himſelf to act, how came he to ſin at all?" Why he acted at all was not *mero caſu*, but by the law of his nature as an agent, it being a good and wiſe conſtitution that the will ſhould follow the dictates of the underſtanding.* This *impulſe* to act is good, becauſe it is

* "The *eſtabliſhed order of nature* is, That the will ſhould always act in a juſt and regular ſubordination to the dictates of the underſtanding: That the mind, as a ſure guide, ſhould go before, determining which is fit to be done and purſued, or omitted and avoided; and by that means direct and lead on the operations of this faculty, which ought to chooſe or refuſe accordingly. And the underſtanding being ſuppoſed to be rightly informed, we always act rationally and well, when things go on in this courſe; the mind duly preſcribing, and the will ſweetly yielding to its preſcriptions, each power keeping its proper place and office. But whether the mind be duly informed or no, the ſame law of nature muſt always take place. Some ſort of concluſions *muſt* be made, whether they be juſt or unjuſt ones, whether plain and expreſs, or only tacit and by conſequence, before the will formally conſents, and gives orders to the executive powers to exert themſelves. Otherwiſe

is an impulſe towards the chief good; and to *act* is in itſelf indifferent; to act *well* is good, and the effect of divine favour; but to act *ill* is the conſequence of a limited view of objects, from which the choice muſt be made; which limitation itſelf is eſſential to every created nature, as is the evil of imperfect exiſtence.

§ 17. Once more: "If the ſin of Adam was a *wrong action*, and *ſinning* in every inſtance implies the ſame, how can we account for the ſinfulneſs of *omiſſions?*" Sinning conſiſts in a perſon's engagement to ſome object that ſtands in competition with another; to ſelf, to ſenſual pleaſure, indulgence, indolence, or the like; whereby the line of rectitude is tranſgreſſed. If therefore a perſon *does not love God*, for inſtance, it is becauſe he *loves ſome other object* with that affection which is due to *him*. So that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, *to ſin*, even in thoſe inſtances that go under the name of *omiſſions*, is to *act wrong*. However, it is proper enough to ſay, that *not to love God* is highly *criminal* in every creature that is capable of loving him, becauſe the inference is infallible that he is criminally employed while not loving him. Man was made *to love God* above all; but when he loves created good, himſelf, pleaſure, eaſe, indulgence, or any thing elſe more than GOD, there lies his criminality. To *pray* is a duty, but the

Otherwiſe the will of man were not a noble rational appetite, but a blind irrational one. For therefore we call it *appetitus rationalis*, becauſe it is made to act *ſub ductu rationis*." DITTON, *ut ſupra*, p. 89.

the formal nature of the prayerleſs perſon's crime is, that he is attached to, or engaged in ſomething elſe which is leſs proper, at the time, all circumſtances conſidered.

§ 18. From the premiſes we may draw the following Corollaries:

1 *Coroll.* The angels who never fell, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, as well as the heirs of ſalvation in this world, owe their ſtanding in purity and happineſs, not to any virtue or inherent power of their own, but to the *ſovereign grace* of GOD. For the ſame reaſon that our firſt parents *did* fall, theſe *would* fall if left in *ſtrict equity* to riſk the conſequence of probation.

2 *Coroll.* The excellency and ſuitableneſs of *moral means* are no ſecurity to a free agent in a ſtate of probation. For, ſurely, Adam had a full and clear exhibition of means, the moſt ſuitable and excellent conceivable, and yet he fell. How extremely futile is the following objection of Dr. WHITBY? "Either theſe *means* are *ſufficient* to render them "*truly willing* to believe and repent, or they are "not; either they are ſufficient to remove the de-"fectiveneſs and diſability of will they have con-"tracted by the fall of Adam to theſe ſaving "actions, or they are not: if they are not, how are "they *means ſufficient* for the attainment of the ſal-"vation which belongs only to the believer and the "penitent, or the eſcaping that damnation which "neceſſarily follows upon the diſability and defect

"for

" for which no ſufficient remedy is by grace pro-
" vided?" † Not only in this paſſage, but through all his book does the Doctor confound *moral means* with *efficient cauſe*. MEANS are objective inſtruments, rational inducements, or good things exhibited; to ſuppoſe, therefore, that *ſufficiency* of means muſt infer ſecurity and happineſs, is to ſuppoſe, either that Adam himſelf had not a ſufficiency of means, or that neither he nor his poſterity were in a ſtate of probation. But as Adam had ſufficient means, and yet fell, much more his poſterity, in their degenerate ſtate, are not ſecured from perdition by mere ſufficiency of means.

3 *Coroll.* As the defection of Adam, or the origin of moral evil, have no poſitive efficient cauſe, *Reprobation*, according to Dr. WHITBY's definition of it, can have no exiſtence. " Abſolute reprobation is " an abſolute infallible decree, That v. g. Judas ſhall " unavoidably fail of obtaining life eternal; that this " event ſhall be ſo certain, that he ſhall never fail " to run himſelf wilfully upon his damnation." * This is a definition which has nothing to anſwer it in the nature of things. Whether any of the orthodox have given ſuch a repreſentation of that ſtate of things which is oppoſite to abſolute election, or not, is not my buſineſs to enquire. But if the doctrine of the preceding pages be true, and the reaſoning concluſive, the following remark is erroneous: " Whatſoever argument holds good againſt an abſolute " decree of reprobation, muſt certainly deſtroy the " oppoſite decree of abſolute election." ‡ *Sin* cannot poſſibly

† *Diſcourſe*, p. 4. * *Ibid.* p. 6, ‡ *Ibid.* p. 2.

poſſibly be the object of poſitive appointment, or abſolute decree, becauſe it has no efficient cauſe; it is the creature's *own* fault, without *any* aid or concurrence of GOD whatever: ſo that if Judas, or any one elſe, *ſhall never fail to run himſelf wilfully upon his damnation*, it is not owing to any act or purpoſe of GOD; it ariſes from the *nature of things* that a creature, if left to itſelf without preventing grace, muſt fall. And all the hardſhip (if any mind can be found profane enough to call it a hardſhip) lies in this, that there are ſome properties of the Creator not communicable to the creature. One of theſe is *independence*, whence ariſes *indefectibility*. On the contrary, *grace* requires divine operation, and conſequently divine purpoſe or abſolute decree. Theſe concluſions are fairly connected with this axiom: *All evil is from ourſelves, but all good is from God.*

§ 19. Dr. WHITBY contends that the *decree of reprobation* hath no foundation in the holy ſcriptures, and that it is contrary to the plain declarations of ſcripture. According to his account of reprobation this is very true; and therefore all he ſays on that head is to no purpoſe.* What he quotes from Bp. DAVENANT does by no means imply what he infers from it. The Biſhop ſays: "No medium can be aſſigned, either "on GOD's part, betwixt the decrees of predeſt-"inating ſome men, and not predeſtinating ſome "others; or on men's part, betwixt men abſolutely "predeſtinated to the attainment of life eternal, and "abſolutely pretermitted, and left infallibly to fail "of the obtainment of eternal life; which we call "repro-

* *Diſc.* I. chap. 1, 2, *paſſim.*

"reprobation." * The propriety of the expreſſions in this quotation can not be defended; for a "*decree* of *not* predeſtinating," is I believe what no man can form juſt conceptions of. What GOD has decreed he certainly effects, and what he effects he certainly decreed; but as he does not effect ſin, ſo neither has he decreed it. Sin is a *privation*, in which GOD has no hand; how can it therefore be *decreed?* And the propriety of ſaying, that any are predeſtinated to ſuffer puniſhment, is the ſame as if I ſhould ſay; *that* man has voluntarily wounded himſelf, therefore his *ſuffering* was *decreed.* As the one is a *neceſſary* conſequence according to the laws of nature, ſo the other is a *neceſſary* effect of ſinning, while the operation of ſtrict equity continues. But though I do not defend the manner of expreſſion, the ſentiment itſelf, *that men left to themſelves will infallibly fail of the attainment of eternal life*, is both true and important. The denial of it leads to the monſtrous abſurdity, already expoſed in the preceding pages, of a creature at once accountable and independent. The Doctor's parade, therefore, about αδοκιμος, ſometimes rendered *reprobate*; and *lamaanly*, GOD made *for himſelf* all things; is altogether beſide the true purpoſe, even ſuppoſing his criticiſms were admitted to be juſt.

It is again urged: "Every exhortation to do a "thing we know men cannot do, muſt be vain; "and he who by it ſeems to be deſirous we ſhould "do that which he knows we cannot, muſt delude "us; and if he knows that GOD by ſome antece-"dent

* Animad. on HORD. p. 205.

" dent purpoſe, will, or decree, reſolved to with-
" hold that aid by which alone we can be in a
" capacity to do it, it muſt alſo be an exhortation
" repugnant to the will of GOD; it being in event,
" and in effect the ſame, to will that any perſon
" ſhould not do the thing which he requires, and
" to will he ſhould not have the means by which
" alone he can perform it. Now it is blaſphemy
" to ſay the exhortations of the Son GOD were
" vain, deluſory, and contrary to his Father's
" will." * This reaſoning is adopted in many parts of the work before me; and is founded entirely on ſuppoſitions which I have ſhewn to be totally inconſiſtent with truth. It ſuppoſes, that men's *obligations* ariſe from their efficient power of doing what is commanded, rather than from the *moral means* afforded them. If, added to a *capacity* of enjoyment, and the *liberty* of chooſing what appears to us preferable, any thing more be required for a ground of obligation than *moral means* adapted in their own nature to make us happy, to *ſin* would be *impoſſible*. Join *ability* to *means*, and actual defection is effectually prevented. But to ſay, that GOD is obliged in equity to prevent ſuch defection, is the ſame as to ſay, that he has no right to make accountable, defectible, dependent beings; no right to give laws which may be broken, to govern creatures which may rebel, or to judge creatures who may involve themſelves in guilt; in a word, that to conſtitute a moral ſyſtem is impoſſible. Which is a conſequence at once juſt, from our Author's principles of reaſoning, and yet too impious for any Theiſt

* *Diſcourſe*, p. 12.

Theiſt to maintain in its naked form. Beſide, our author ſuppoſes that the doctrine of the orthodox denies to the reprobates a ſufficiency of *means* for ſecuring happineſs, and implies a *decree of withholding* neceſſary aid; both which are plainly erroneous. No one can juſtly ſay that he has not *ſuitable means* of ſalvation while he has exhibited before him the precepts and promiſes of the ſacred oracles; nor is it maintained that any are condemned but for the abuſe of ſuch means as they really enjoy. And as to a *decree of withholding* aids, it is no leſs abſurd than a *decree not to decree*; or, a *decree to decree nothing*.

But "God's foreknowledge, ſayings, and predictions have no ſuch *influence* on the will of man, as to lay on him a neceſſity to do what he foreknows, and hath foretold he will do." * Granted; and a formal proof of a propoſition ſo plain was needleſs. However, if God actually *does* foreknow the event of things, there muſt be ſome reaſon or cauſe of it, whether we know that cauſe or not; and to call this *contingence* or *ſelf-determination* is but to cover our ignorance with barbarous unmeaning words. If God foreknows the reſult of all *poſſible* ſyſtems, whether natural or moral, there muſt be an infallible ground of that foreknowledge; which I humbly conceive may be ſufficiently accounted for by aſcribing all entity and goodneſs, whether actual or hypothetical, natural and moral, to God as the cauſe, which his infinite knowledge muſt needs perfectly comprehend, and conſequently every thing,

* *Ibid.* p. 14.

in every poſſible degree, which may be called evil or defective. He who knows preciſely, as being the proper cauſe thereof, every degree of pleaſure, beauty, and light; muſt with equal preciſion know the pain, deformity, and darkneſs that ſtand oppoſed to theſe. If the omniſcient God foreknows all the *good* which he may cauſe, he being the only ſource of all good; for the ſame reaſon he foreknows all the *evil* which may take place, and of which he cannot be the cauſe, by its being a perfect contraſt to the cauſed good. If we can form ſome adequate knowledge of the degrees of privation, by knowing previouſly the ſtandard and degrees of poſitive good; if we can know the dimenſions of a ſhadow by knowing the dimenſions and poſitions of a body that intercepts the rays of light; with what infinite exactneſs does God, all-knowing and all-wiſe, foreſee moral evil in all poſſible circumſtances, degrees, and conſequences, without any decree or cauſation of it whatever.

§ 20. Thus we have endeavoured to ſhew, that a perfect moral agent in a ſtate of original probation has no inherent power to preſerve himſelf in a courſe of active obedience; becauſe of the creature's abſolute dependence on God as to eſſence, being, and operation: and ſeeing Adam himſelf had not that *power*, which Dr. Whitby ſuppoſes the orthodox deny to his poſterity *merely* on account of original ſin, which he affects to regard as the root of the points he oppoſes, it follows that one main pillar of *Arminianiſm* is baſeleſs and rotten, however

ever gaudily ornamented with learned ſophiſtry. And among other inferences juſtly deducible from the premiſes, this is one, that our Author's reaſoning againſt *reprobation* in his *two firſt chapters* is like a formal attack on a man of ſtraw of his own fabrication; as if an abſolute decree of what is *good*, implied an abſolute decree of what is *bad*.

SECT. II.

Whether the Calviniſtic explanations of the Five Points in diſpute be inconſiſtent with EQUITY.

§ 1. *Introduction.* § 2. (I) *Abſolute* ELECTION. *The queſtion ſtated.* § 3—9. *Dr.* WHITBY's *principal objections anſwered.* § 10—12. (II) *Particular* REDEMPTION. *The queſtion ſtated.* § 13—16. *That Chriſt died only for all conditionally, anſwered.* § 17—20. *Other objections anſwered.* § 21—25. (III) *Special* GRACE. § 26—29. (IV) *The* WILL *determined by grace.* § 30—35. (V) *Perſeverance of ſaints.* § 36. *Recapitulation.*

§ 1. A SECOND pillar of *Arminianiſm* is this, that the *Calviniſtic* ſide of the diſputed points is not conſiſtent with *equity*. While examining the ſtrength of this pillar I ſhall follow the ſame order obſerved by Dr. WHITBY in his Diſcourſe, beginning with the divine decrees. And under each head it will be proper, firſt of all, to give the true ſtate of the queſtion, and then to enquire whether it ſtands on *equitable* grounds.

§ 2. (I.) *Abſolute Election.* "This with reſpect to the *end*, is an abſolute decree and purpoſe of bringing

bringing a certain number of perſons to eternal life, without reſpect to their foreſeen faith or perſeverance," as the ground of divine choice. "As it reſpects the *means*, it is an eternal decree and purpoſe of giving to theſe men, and theſe alone, that effectual grace which ſhall infallibly, and infruſtrably, produce in them faith, ſanctification, and perſeverance to the end." * To this definition I am not inclined to object; but againſt the following *note* upon it I muſt put a caveat. "Here note, ſays our Author, That this *election* or *predeſtination* conſidereth all men in the *ſame* condition, alike miſerable and damnable, alike impotent, and wanting effectual grace; ſo that as in two apples of equal goodneſs, no reaſon can be given why I ſhould chooſe one rather than the other, ſo neither can *any reaſon be aſſigned* why all or any of theſe perſons are thus elected to ſalvation, rather than all, or any that are not elected." † If theſe words imply, that there are not in mankind various *degrees* of depravity and wickedneſs, whereby ſome are in a *worſe* condition than others through the different ſtages of life; if they ſuggeſt, *that no reaſon can be aſſigned* by DIVINE WISDOM why any are elected to ſalvation rather than others, the orthodox doctrine is miſrepreſented. What we hold is, that all men *without exception*, but not to the *ſame degree*, are, in the view of equity, condemnable, impotent, and expoſed to miſery; ſo that not one of them would be ſaved

* Diſcourſe, p. 35. † *Ibid.*

were there no predeſtination or abſolute election of ſome particular perſons to eternal life. And we further maintain, that, notwithſtanding *human* penetration is incapable of aſſigning *reaſons* why ſome are predeſtinated to happineſs rather than others, to *God* there muſt be reaſons adequate to the diſcrimination. No one can *juſtly* urge a *claim*, why a preference ſhould be ſhewn to him rather than his neighbour, in reſpect of happineſs as the end, or grace as the mean; much leſs can any one plead *merit*, or worthineſs properly his *own*, as the foreſeen reaſon of his election: however, it by no means follows that God ſees no ground of preference. Were it poſſible for us to view God's reaſons of chooſing, as they ſtand in his all-comprehenſive mind, there is no doubt but they would produce a conviction of their propriety in proportion as our minds were virtuouſly diſpoſed, or aſſimilated to God.

§ 3. "In oppoſition to this doctrine I aſſert, ſays our Author, *firſt*, That the election mentioned in the holy ſcriptures is not that of particular perſons, but only of *churches* and *nations*. *Secondly*, That this election doth import rather their being choſen to the enjoyment of the *means* of grace, than to a certainty of being ſaved by thoſe means; that it is only that which puts them in a capacity of having all the privileges and bleſſings which God hath promiſed to his church and people, rather than under any abſolute aſſurance of their ſalvation, or of any ſuch grace as ſhall infallibly, and without any

any poſſibility of fruſtration, procure their ſalvation. *Thirdly*, That the election to ſalvation mentioned in the holy ſcriptures is only *through faith* joined with *holineſs*, according to thoſe words of St. Paul, *God hath elected you* (Theſſalonians) *to ſalvation* εν αγιασμῳ, *by the ſanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth.* That it is only a *conditional* election upon our perſeverance in a life of holineſs, and is to be made ſure unto us by good works." * Again: "Conſider whether he conceives more truly and honourably of God, who thinks he *chooſes* his favourites *without reaſon*, and rewards them without any qualifications but thoſe he irreſiſtibly works in them; or he who looks upon him as one who dealeth with all men, not according to *his* but *their own* works, as they are willing and obedient, as they *render themſelves fit objects* of his love, and rewards them as they uſe duly, or receive his grace in vain, as they improve the talents he hath given them, or hide them in a napkin?" † Once more: "Could he hope to manifeſt the *Equity* of his ways by ſaying, *All ſouls are mine*, if he was not only like the oſtrich to the *greateſt part* of them, hardening himſelf againſt his own offspring, made after his own image, as if they were not his, but even making *the moſt* of them, after the fall of Adam, under that previous act of preterition, which rendered their damnation unavoidable? Is he ſo concerned to juſtify the *Equity* of his proceedings by declaring that the ſon ſhall not die a temporal death for the iniquity of his father, but the ſoul that perſonally

* *Ibid.* p. 35, 36. † *Ibid.* p. 29.

ally ſinneth he ſhall die; when this more obvious exception lay againſt the *Equity* of his proceedings with the ſons of men, that moſt of the ſons of Adam lay under death eternal by his peremptory decree for the ſin of their fore-fathers, committed long before they had a being, and ſo before they were in a capacity of any perſonal offence." *

§ 4. My preſent purpoſe does not require, that I ſhould produce the *ſcriptural evidence* and *arguments* by which I conceive the doctrine of *predeſtination*, or the abſolute election of ſome particular perſons to eternal life, is taught and ſupported; this the inquiſitive reader may find in Bodies of Divinity, or common-place Treatiſes, which are innumerable; and ſome in a more *practical* manner: † what I deſign is to vindicate the doctrine againſt *Arminian* exceptions, and particularly thoſe which reflect upon it as *inequitable*. It may be remarked, however, that moſt of the texts of ſcripture produced by Dr. WHITBY to prove that there is an election of *churches* and *nations*, are taken by the *Calviniſts* in the ſame latitude; but how can the citing of a number of paſſages out of the Old and New Teſtament for this purpoſe prove that there is no predeſtination of particular perſons? A few ſpecimens will ſhew the abſurdity of his plan. "Deut. iv. 37. *Becauſe he loved thy fathers, therefore* ἐξελέξατο τὸ σπέρμα αὐτῶν, *he choſe their ſeed after them, and brought*

* *Ibid.* p. 32.

† Particularly COLES's Practical Diſcourſe of God's Sovereignty; and Mr. BOOTH's Reign of Grace.

brought them out of Egypt by his mighty power; where it is evident that the whole ſeed of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, even all that came out of Egypt, are the elect." * Who ever denied it? " 1 Pet. ii. 9. *Ye are* γενος εκλεκτον, *an elect generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye might ſhew forth the praiſes of him that hath called you from darkneſs into his marvellous light*; all which are the very titles given to the whole jewiſh nation in the Old Teſtament. Now ſince St. Peter could not affirm of all theſe chriſtians, without a revelation, that they were elect, according to that ſenſe of the word, which makes it to import, men abſolutely deſigned for eternal happineſs, he muſt affirm this of them all, becauſe they all profeſſed chriſtianity, and ſo were viſible members of the church of Chriſt." † Suppoſe we admit all that is here contended for, by what rule of reaſoning does it follow that, becauſe GOD choſe the Jews and Chriſtians *as a people*, there is no *perſonal* election?

§ 5. How many texts of ſcripture are perverted, and to what degree, in our Author's enumeration and critical explications of them, makes no part of my plan; this has been done already, in a very ample manner, by Dr. GILL, in his Cauſe of GOD and Truth; let us therefore attend to what he urges under the *ſecond* head of oppoſition, as before quoted. The *election of ſcripture imports a being choſen to the enjoyment of the* MEANS *of grace rather than to a certainty of being* SAVED *by thoſe means.* It ſeems then if we have

* *Diſcourſe*, p. 37. † *Ibid.* p. 39, 40.

have the *means* we can *ſave* ourſelves. The queſtion is not, whether or not GOD *chooſes* men to enjoy the *means* of grace, for this is allowed by all; but whether GOD or the ſinner himſelf renders theſe means *efficacious* for ſalvation? If it be ſaid *free will*, or our own *choice* and reſolution, then the creature has power to quit its dependence on GOD in its operations, contrary to what was demonſtrated in the laſt Section; or if it be owned that divine *grace* gives efficacy to the means, then the point is virtually given up. For whatever is done by grace is done by a ſovereign act, and conſequently implies abſolute election; except we ſhould ſay, contrary to all reaſon, that GOD's acts of grace were not foreknown.

§ 6. The *third* part of the oppoſition is, that *the election of ſcripture is only through faith joined with holineſs, on condition of perſeverance and good works.* It is readily granted, that faith and holineſs, perſeverance and good works, are connected with predeſtination, as the way appointed for adults in order to obtain the promiſed ſalvation: but this is not the point of difference. The main queſtion here is, What is the *primary cauſe* of election? or, in other words, Is the *performance* of the conditions required the *primary* cauſe of perſonal election? We ſay it is not; becauſe this would be to put ſalvation on a condition that would never in fact be performed, however conſonant with *equity* ſuch a requiſition might be found. If Adam when upright failed in preſerving his purity and happineſs, what rational proſpect is there that his fallen poſterity will emerge from guilt, corruption, and evil habits, to innocence,

innocence, purity, and goodneſs, by the uſe of any moral means whatever? Faith in its principle is the *gift of God*, and holineſs is begun by our being *born of the Spirit*; but if faith and holineſs are immediately from God, how can they be immediately from ourſelves, or the primary cauſe of election? God worketh in us both to *will* and to *do* of his own good pleaſure; but what he wills and does in time he undoubtedly *predetermined* to do, and therefore the ſubjects of ſuch gracious volitions and operations (for no other are intended by the apoſtle) were thereunto predeſtinated. If it is God only who *begins* the good work of holineſs and all true religion, which may be well called a new *creation*; he alone muſt *carry on* that work, which may with equal propriety be called a divine preſervation.

§ 7. We are again told in effect that God *chooſeth his favourites as they render themſelves fit objects of his love, and not according to qualifications which he works irreſiſtibly in them.* I find it not very eaſy to guard my pen from affixing ſome bad name to the ſentiment here expreſſed, and were I diſpoſed to ſeek for an epithet expreſſive of its *deſert*, it would be difficult to procure one. We cannot be choſen it ſeems, in order to be made good and happy by divine grace, but muſt make ourſelves ſo in order to be choſen. Adam's deſcendants, with all their imperfections, muſt do *that* which it is demonſtrable Adam himſelf could not do, before they can be elected and ſaved! What a comfortable, hopeful doctrine! For a ſinner to *render himſelf* a fit object of

of GOD's love, taken in the ſenſe here intended, excites an idea ſo monſtrous, that I am perſuaded no truly virtuous mind can think on it ſeriouſly, and without violent prejudice, but with horror, deteſtation and grief. Duties are undoubtedly required by the moral Governor proportionable to the means he affords; but yet we are *ſaved by grace*, not of *works* leſt any man ſhould boaſt; no, not by any *works of righteouſneſs* which we have done, but by the waſhing of *regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*. There is no *ſalvation* without *regeneration*; and to ſay that we *regenerate ourſelves*, is equally unſcriptural and abſurd. Suppoſing, for argument' ſake, that this initial ſanctification is the conditional ground of juſtification, and conſequently of election; even then, the condition would be ſuch that no one would ever be elected while the world ſtands. But if, as we hold with the apoſtle, GOD *juſtifieth the ungodly*, and in virtue of that ſovereign act, which regards the ſurety and the ſinner one in law, ſlays the enmity, opens the eyes of the underſtanding, and ſhines into the mind to give the knowledge of his glory, creates a clean heart and renews a right ſpirit; then our concluſion acquires *double* ſtrength. — *Diſhonourable to God to reward his favourites without any qualifications but thoſe he irreſiſtibly works in them.* Rather, how honourable in GOD, how deſerving of eternal praiſe, that, when all men had gone out of the way of peace and ſafety, when all deſerved to be left in darkneſs, diſtance, and endleſs woe, he ſtops the progreſs of the plague of ſin, reſcues the ſinner from danger, and by ſovereign

reign grace, which knows no eventual reſiſtance, begets him to a lively hope! Does it reflect honour on the divine character to ſuppoſe that none of the human race ought to be choſen and rewarded but ſuch as *qualify themſelves* by the uſe of moral means? The language of ſome people leads us to think that it is as eaſy to ſecure the divine favour and obtain heaven by our own efforts, as it is for a man of competent fortune to carry a fowling-piece in a *legal* manner. Would it have been *honourable* in GOD (though not unjuſt) to exclude from hope all but thoſe who *make themſelves fit*, or who *qualify themſelves* for GOD's favour and choice; while it is demonſtrable that no one ever did, in the ſenſe here implied, or ever will perform ſuch a condition? This pillar is ſo rotten that were it not artfully propped by the enemies of grace, it would ſoon fall of itſelf. That part of the objection which refers to the propriety of rewarding all according to the manner in which means are improved in a ſtate of probation, the reader will find anſwered in a former part of this volume.*

§ 8. The objection which follows deſerves particular attention. "Could he manifeſt the *equity* of his ways by ſaying, *All ſouls are mine*, if making moſt of them under a previous act of *preterition*, before they were in a capacity of any perſonal offence?" It is granted by all that GOD is *equitable*, eſſentially diſpoſed to render unto all the utmoſt of their juſt claim; and it is alſo granted that *all ſouls are*

* Chap. II. SECT. VII.

are his, his property, his dependent creatures. Now, if the hypothetical nature of things, and the eſſential nature of creatural dependence, imply the neceſſity of *grace* to ſecure happineſs and rectitude, even to a perfect creature as before proved; † how can it be *inequitable* to *paſs by guilty* creatures? If men are, in fact, *ſinful*, it ſtands perfectly conſiſtent with *equity* to *paſs them by*, or not ſecuring their ſalvation by efficacious grace; and if this be the ſtate of all the children of Adam, of what uſe is it to cavil about the *manner* in which they are brought to that condition. To deny the fact, becauſe our weak ſight does not perceive the equity of the meaſure, is not unlike denying the exiſtence of a material world becauſe we have no clear perception of the *manner* in which the Almighty created it. If the infinitely wiſe GOD acts for a final end, he muſt *deſign* what he actually *effects*; he effects the ſalvation of ſome, by the agency of his Holy Spirit, helping their infirmities, and *enabling* them to improve the means of ſalvation, conſequently he muſt have *deſigned* this effect. Whatever in the event appears to be the work of GOD, muſt alſo appear to have been *purpoſed* by him; therefore all who are *eventually* ſaved were deſigned or *predeſtinated* for that event. But if GOD was obliged in *equity* to do this to ſome, the ſame obligation muſt extend to *all others*, (for all the difference between them, on the ſuppoſition, is made by *grace*, otherwiſe *none* would be ſaved;) the conſequence of which is, that GOD is bound in equity to ſave thoſe whom he actually ſuffers to periſh.

† Chap. IV. SECT. I.

periſh. That is to ſay, he is bound in equity to do what he does not! Such is the abſurdity of the principle I am oppoſing — If it be ſaid, They who periſh have *ſufficient means* to be ſaved, but they abuſe them; we ſay ſo too, and contend that this is the true and only reaſon of their perdition.

When our Author accuſes the *Decretaliſts*, as he contemptuouſly calls his opponents, he finds it neceſſary to repreſent them as denying *ſufficient means* to thoſe who periſh, becauſe in fact they run to damnation. Theſe are his words: "If they have *ſufficient means* to convert their wicked wills from the love of ſin to a prevailing love to GOD, the pravity of thoſe wills can never be the cauſe why they are left infallibly to fail of life eternal, or why they never fail of running on wilfully to their own damnation; ſeeing they have means ſufficient to rectify the pravity of their wills." * It ſeems, then, *means* are not *ſufficient* except the effect be produced; the goſpel is not a ſufficient mean of ſalvation to any who are not actually ſaved by it; that is, in a word, means are no means except they act *mechanically*, which is to aſſert that *moral means* have no exiſtence! It is eaſy to retort, if *ſome* fail of ſalvation, which is no part of the diſpute, what is the reaſon of that failure? If the means are ſufficient, how is it poſſible for *any* to be loſt? But it is an acknowledged *fact* that ſome go to perdition, and it is equally a *fact* that they do not come to this end for want of ſufficient means of avoiding it, (elſe how ſhall GOD judge the world?) hence we muſt

* *Diſcourſe*, p. 4.

muſt infer that their perdition is *equitable*. But if ſo, no doubt can remain that the ſalvation of others which GOD *effects*, and therefore muſt have *predetermined*, is perfectly equitable, except we ſay, that the exerciſe of grace is inconſiſtent with equity; an abſurdity at which no one can heſitate.

§ 9. To bring into one view the evidence of this truth, that GOD's decree of predeſtination is not inconſiſtent with divine equity, let the following particulars be obſerved:

1. If the creature, *as a creature*, is abſolutely dependent upon GOD for its eſſence, exiſtence, properties, good qualities, and operations; if the creature, *as accountable*, has no further claim in equity than a *capacity* of enjoying the chief good, ſuitable *means* for ſecuring that enjoyment, with *freedom* to ſin or not to ſin; if moreover the creature has deviated from rectitude by any means whatever; it plainly follows that ſuch a ſinner is not *wronged* by GOD's preterition; or when *left* in that ſtate into which he has brought himſelf. But,

2. If it is not inconſiſtent with equity to leave the ſinner, whoſe miſery and ſin are *of himſelf*, to the naturally inſeparable conſequences of his defection; if in that caſe nothing which is due to him is withheld from him; it muſt appear with ſuperior evidence that no one is wronged by being choſen to honour. There are but *three* caſes that can be put in reference to this matter. Granting what the ſcripture and experience abundantly teſtify, that all mankind are *in fact* in a ſinful ſtate, (how they came into

into that ſtate refers to another queſtion;) granting moreover, what has been already in part and will be further proved, that no ſinner *will* ever emerge from ſin to purity, or *can* riſe from guilt to innocence, without ſovereign aid; either *all mankind* muſt continue in ſin and miſery, or *all* muſt be ſaved by ſovereign grace, or elſe only *a part* be ſaved. The *firſt* of theſe three ſuppoſitions would indeed be conſiſtent with exacteſt equity, if it be ſo to make a being free and to give him a law with penal ſanctions; but it would exclude the exerciſe of mercy. The *ſecond* ſuppoſition would not, it is true, be inconſiſtent with equity, for if GOD exerciſed mercy towards every ſinner without exception we could not ſay that this attribute would be injured; but then it does not appear in fact, even to thoſe I am oppoſing, to be the divine plan; for I have not now to do profeſſedly with ſuch as plead for univerſal reſtoration. The *third* ſuppoſition, therefore, is that which we acknowledge to be the real ſtate of things. Some periſh, and ſome are ſaved. But is it poſſible to conceive that any one is *wronged*, or inequitably dealt with, by being *choſen* to honour and happineſs? Is the clay, which had no demand on the potter, any way wronged when appointed to form a beautiful veſſel? If its neighbour-clay is not injured by not being more honourably uſed, much leſs is itſelf injured.

3. Whatever all-wiſe reaſons GOD may have in chooſing ſome and not others, whereby the end he propoſes may be beſt anſwered, it is plain from the premiſes that there lies no ground of complaint

againſt the procedure. *Preterition* is a mere negative idea, which implies neither an actual privation, nor a poſitive decree; nor is *reprobation*, in the acknowledged and ſcriptural acceptation of it, any *abſolute* decree, being properly nothing more than the *hypothetical* purpoſe of GOD to leave the ſinner under the influence and expoſed to the natural conſequences of his own *demerit*. Its true language is, If ſuch a ſinner *deſerves* to ſuffer, he *ſhall* ſuffer. But abſolute election is from *grace*, and ſpeaks to this effect; Though the ſinner in ſtrict juſtice *deſerves* to ſuffer, yet *mercy* in this inſtance will ſo order it that he *ſhall not* ſuffer. Reprobation, then, ſprings from *demerit*, but election from *grace*. Now if equity cannot ſave, as of itſelf it certainly cannot, is there any reaſon why ſovereignty ſhould be bound? How juſtly may GOD ſay to ſuch an objector to abſolute election, Becauſe mine eye is good, is thine evil? Beſides,

4. The defection of all was foreſeen as poſſible, and hypothetically certain, irreſpective of any decree, and therefore not inequitable. Of all poſſible plans, both phyſical and moral, wiſdom choſe the beſt; that which had the greateſt advantages and feweſt inconveniences to anſwer the end propoſed by infinite intelligence and conſummate wiſdom. The *ſource* of all poſſibles is the divine all-ſufficiency, the *arrangement* of all poſſibles into hypothetical ſyſtems relates to the divine intellect, but the *decree* refers, not to the ſource or the arrangement of its objects, but to the *abſolute certainty* of what was already hypothetically certain. And as it is impoſſible

impoſſible to conceive of God decreeing *moral evil*, or *undeſerved ſuffering*, it inevitably follows that *no decree* can be inconſiſtent with equity, and therefore abſolute election is perfectly conſiſtent with it; which was to be proved.

§ 10. (II.) *Particular Redemption.* The diſpute upon this queſtion is conſiderably narrowed if we take into the account what has been already advanced, on the *rectoral intention* of the ſupreme Governor, and the *obligations* of men to receive the goſpel.* In ſtating the queſtion Dr. WHITBY obſerves: "I reject that objection as abſurd, which "ſaith, *Chriſt died ſufficiently for all; but intentionally only for the elect.*" † But the reader muſt remember that this is not *my* diſtinction; for I have allowed that God *intended* the death of Chriſt to extend *rectorally* to all; but what I now contend for is that it extends *decretively* to ſome more than to others, and that this diſcrimination is perfectly conſiſtent with equity. In oppoſition to this our author ſtates his notion of the univerſality of redemption as follows: "When I ſay Chriſt died "for all, I mean that he died *equally* for all. "This will be evident if we conſider, that he "offered the ſame ſacrifice; ſuffered one and the "ſame death; ſhed the ſame blood for all for "whom he died.—Moreover, it is certain that "the ſufferings of Chriſt and his blood ſhed, "cannot be diſtributed into parts, ſo that one "ſhould have one ſhare of it, another a ſecond,

* Chap. II. SECT. V. VI. † *Diſcourſe.* p. 102.

" and another a third. — When we ſay Chriſt died " for all, we do not mean that he died for all, or " any *abſolutely*, or without any conditions to be " performed on their part to intereſt them in the " bleſſings of his paſſion; but only that he died " for all *conditionally*, or ſo as that they ſhould be " made partakers of the bleſſings of his ſalutary " paſſion upon condition of their faith, repentance, " and ſincere obedience to the laws of the *New* " *Covenant*. — He died not with intention to con- " fer the bleſſings of his ſalutary paſſion on any but " true believers, true penitents, and ſuch as would " obey the laws of his *new covenant*." *

§ 11. It is ſaid; " *Chriſt died* EQUALLY *for all*, " becauſe he offered the ſame ſacrifice, ſuffered the " ſame death, ſhed the ſame blood for all for whom " he died; and his blood cannot be diſtinguiſhed " into parts." I readily grant, that the *rectoral* intention extended *equally* to all, for the reaſons here mentioned, among others; but how can it thence follow that there is no *decretive* purpoſe to favour ſome rather than others, with reſpect to its application? Can it be *unjuſt* to *favour ſome*, while *no* one can *claim* that favour? But it is urged " that Chriſt died for *all conditionally*, *i. e.* if they " believe, repent, and obey; but for *none abſolutely*."

To avoid the raſhneſs of oppoſition, and to remove as much as poſſible, a miſunderſtanding of the ſtate of the queſtion in reference to the orthodox, let the following diſtinctions be candidly noticed: " My

* *Ibid.* p. 104, 105.

" My ſcope here is to ſhew, That the body or church of Chriſt are *eſpecially* concerned and intereſted in redemption. And in order thereto, I would conſider two other of the divine works, both which reſpect the world *univerſally*, as redemption doth, and yet have a *ſpeciality* in them, as redemption alſo hath, *viz. creation* and *providence*.

" Firſt, *Creation:* One GOD was the Maker of all; but all were not made for the *ſame* uſe and end: He had a *peculiar* ſcope in the making of *ſome*, which was not common to the *whole*; yea, the *whole* was made for the ſake of that *ſome*. As in a great houſe are many veſſels, all of one maſter's providing, and all for his own ſervice, ſome to [more] honour, and ſome to [leſs honour, or comparative] diſhonour: ſo in the world, *ſome* GOD raiſed up to be monuments of his power and juſtice * [or *equitable* ſeverity.]

" Secondly, *Providence:* This alſo extends to all, and to each individual. He hath power over all, and governs them in their moſt rebellious deſigns and actions. But as touching his church, *the people of his holineſs*,† he holds a *peculiar* kind of government over them, and ſteers their concerns: and this ſo far exceeds the other, that, in compariſon, 'tis ſaid, *He never bore rule over them*; ‡ and, which is ſtill to be remarked, the others' concerns are made ſubſervient to theirs; *he is head over all to the church.* §

* Exod. ix. 16. Jude 4. Rom. ix. 22. 1 Pet. ii. 8.
† Iſa. lxiii. 18. ‡ Ver. 19. § Eph. i. 22.

" In like manner *Redemption* may be ſaid to be *general*, and yet to have a *Speciality* in it. It is general, [both] in reſpect of perſons, [and] in reſpect of things. Both which are true apart, though not conjunctly: it purchaſeth *ſome* good things for *all*; and *all* good things for *ſome*.

1. " As it reſpects *perſons*, it obtains a general reprieve, extenſive to all the ſons of Adam. The ſin of the world was ſo far expiated, that vengeance was not *preſently* executed; which muſt have been, had not the Son of GOD interpoſed himſelf. His being ſlain from the foundation of the world, was the foundation of the world's ſtanding, and of all the good things which the world in general are partakers of. All that order and uſefulneſs which yet ſurvive among the creatures, with all the remains of our primitive ſtate, were preſerved, or rather reſtored, by *redemption*. Chriſt is that light which lighteth every one that cometh into the world: *i. e.* The light and bleſſings which any man hath, he has them from Chriſt *as a Redeemer*; *by him all things conſiſt*.*

" But let us not omit, that all this had a *ſpecial* reſpect to the *church elect*: for *them* it was that the world was made; they are the ſubſtance of it;† and but for them it had been diſſolved or turned into a lake of fire. What the prophet ſpeaks of Iſrael, was true of the *univerſe*, *Except the Lord of hoſts had left us a remnant, we had been as Sodom*.‡— As thoſe days of tribulation were ſhortened for the elect' ſake (not yet in being); ſo, for *them* it was, that

* Col. i. 17. † Iſa. vi. 13. ‡ Iſa. i. 9.

that when ſin came in, deſtruction was warded off. —It had been a *light thing* for Chriſt, and not worthy his ſufferings, to raiſe up the ruins made by Adam to ſuch a degree of reſtorement, as would only have ſet him in his former ſtate, and that upon terms more unlikely to ſucceed. This had been to give a *greater value* for things of *leſſer moment*; for it needs muſt be a happier ſtate, to be made upright, without bias to evil, than to be moved by all manner of motives, while fettered by unbelief, and a natural bent to revolt further. For notwithſtanding all thoſe motives or means, not the *majority* only, but the *univerſality* of mankind might have periſhed and gone to hell; which would in no wiſe have anſwered GOD's end in *making* the world, much leſs in *redeeming* it. 'Twas therefore neceſſary redemption ſhould have a farther reach than to bring men into a *mere ſalvable* ſtate; and that could not be leſs than a ſtate of *certain ſalvation.* And, in order to this,

2. "Redemption was general as to *things*, even *all* that pertaineth to life and godlineſs; eternal life, and whatever conduceth thereto. — This is that redemption we are treating of; and this is the ſenſe of the preſent poſition, *viz.* That Redemption *thus qualified* is *peculiar* to the church; and that *election* is the pattern by which [this *peculiarity* of] *redemption* is to be meaſured: *The* SON *can do nothing but what he ſeeth the* FATHER *do*, John v. 19.*

§ 12. Having made theſe lenient conciliatory remarks, from a writer who is claſſed among the

* COLE's Practical Diſcourſe of Redemption, p. 117—120.

moſt rigid Calviniſts, I ſhall endeavour, after ſtating my own views with all the preciſion in my power, to combat the principal differing poſitions in Dr. WHITBY's Diſcourſe on this point, and finally to ſhew, that there is nothing in the orthodox account of the doctrine inconſiſtent with any principle of equity. Subſervient to this deſign let it be noticed,

1. That, Adam having loſt his rectitude and innocence, without a *Redeemer* neither he nor any of his poſterity could be *ſaved*, becauſe the claims of equity could not be ſurrendered, without the execution of a penal ſanction proportionable to the violations of law and rectitude. Had ſovereignty ſuſpended the ſentence, pardoned the crime, and reſtored to favour, without a Mediator in whom, acting and ſuffering, the honours of law and juſtice might be retrieved; wherein would have appeared either the wiſdom or the authority of legiſlation, when viewed by other probationers? To ſin with impunity, or to pardon without *manifeſting* diſpleaſure at ſin, how contrary to all ideas of wiſdom, legiſlation, and even benevolence! A ſuppoſed benevolence which flows to ſinful men through any other channel than the blood of the croſs, is an idea that has no exiſting archetype; and indicates in its votaries an impious attempt to ſet up the haughty precarious wiſdom of the world in oppoſition to that of GOD.

2. Chriſt being made a propitiation for ſin, the honours of government are ſecure, whether a few ſinners only were ſaved or hundreds of thouſands. Nothing leſs was ſufficient for one, nothing more was neceſſary for millions. The great atoning

ſacrifice

ſacrifice knows no limits to its efficacy but thoſe aſſigned it by the decretive rule of application. If *applied* to all, it would be *efficacious* to all. A new and living way is conſecrated, nor is there any bar of hindrance laid acroſs it. Spiritual and eternal bleſſings are exhibited, recommended, enforced; ſo that the only obſtruction which remains is in *ourſelves.* — Yet,

3. Such is our apoſtate condition, that a ſpiritual renovation alone, effected by the Holy Spirit, enſures an appropriation of ſaving benefits. "Paul may plant and Apollos water, but GOD giveth the increaſe." The bare *diſcovery* of truth, whatever be the means, will not ſecure the converſion of one ſoul. When, therefore, the truth is received in the love thereof, *it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure.* The divine operation is the infallible index of the decree. What *is* effected, was *intended* to be effected. Thoſe who *are* actually redeemed from ſin and hell, were *appointed* ſo to be; except we ſay, either, that man is his own ſaviour, or that ſome are ſaved who were not intended, which none will aſſert. — The way is now clear for examining the principal poſition.

§ 13. "Chriſt died for *all conditionally, i. e. if* they believe, repent, and obey; but for *none abſolutely.*" This tenet ſuppoſes, that the *ability* to believe, repent, and obey, originates in ourſelves, though involved in calamities of which our *inability*, morally conſidered, is among the chief. It ſuppoſes that it is not GOD who *worketh in us* to will and

and to do of his own good pleaſure; that it is not *given us* on the behalf of Chriſt *to believe* on him; that it is not an exalted Saviour who *gives repentance* as well as remiſſion; that *obedience* is not the *fruit* of the ſpirit, and the *conſequence* of redemption. It is of no avail to ſay, that GOD affords to us the *means*, but that we are to give them *efficiency* ourſelves; for this is to renounce that abſolute dependence of the creature upon the Creator which is demonſtrably eſſential to it.* *Means* without a *diſpoſition* can effect nothing; for moral means operate according to their excellency, only as connected with the ſtate of the moral agent. Let therefore the force and aptitude of means be accumulated and multiplied to any given degree, they will contain no *efficient* power to meliorate the mind. The very ſuppoſition is totally abſurd, that *moral* means have a *mechanical* effect, irreſpective of the previous diſpoſition; and it is equally abſurd to imagine that the diſpoſition itſelf is the mechanical effect of ſuch means. In ſhort, the *condition* ſuppoſed by our author is an *impoſſible* condition; a guilty, polluted, impotent, inimical, rebellious creature, becoming *faithful*, *penitent*, and *obedient*, *before* the merits of Chriſt are applied! The doctrine of the goſpel is, that *Chriſt redeems us from all iniquity*; but our author teaches, that we do in fact *deliver ourſelves* from the iniquity of unbelief, impenitence, and diſobedience, *before* we ſhare in the benefits of redemption! The fact is, he every where confounds men's moral *abilities* with their *obligations*. That we are *obliged* to be holy and good, univerſally obedient and conformed to rectitude,

* SECT. 1. of this Chapter.

rectitude, is one thing, and an awakening inflexible truth; but that we, being tranſgreſſors, have actual, inherent *ability* to diſcharge the obligation, an ability for which we are not beholden to ſovereign grace and diſcriminating influence, is a falſehood of the greateſt magnitude, ruinous to the preſumptuous ſinner, and highly affronting to the divine majeſty.

Chriſt and eternal life are propoſed to ſinners under a *conditional* form, it is granted; for otherwiſe man would not be dealt with as an accountable being: *believe*, and you ſhall be ſaved from guilt; *repent*, and your ſins ſhall be blotted out; *obey*, and you ſhall be for ever bleſſed, is the language of *moral government*. The declaration, that *God gives to ſinners* eternal life in Jeſus Chriſt, is *abſolute*, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear;" as abſolute and free a proffer as ever was made of a benefit by one being to another; otherwiſe ſalvation muſt begin with ourſelves, and therefore there would be no ſalvation at all. The propoſal, as originating in ſovereign grace, is *abſolute*; as proceeding from the moral Governor, it is *conditional*. Sovereignty viewing men as *ſinful creatures*, totally helpleſs and hopeleſs, makes *abſolute* overtures of mercy to pardon, grace to help, Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, the Holy Spirit and his influences, life and eternal happineſs; thus he *gives* grace and glory, and *ſhews* man what is good: but the Governor viewing men as *accountable beings* addreſſes them under a *conditional* form. In this propoſal, however, whether we conſider it in a conditional or an abſolute form, there appears nothing of

of a diſcriminating nature; *all alike* are addreſſed. And now the queſtion returns, Was it not the *deſign* of Grace to render the appointed means *actually available* to ſome of mankind? If not, what certainty, nay, what probability, or even poſſibility is there left that any one will in fact *believe*, *repent*, and *obey?* Is not the heart of man deceitful above all things? Is it not a heart of ſtone? Who but GOD can remove the ſinful petrifaction, and ſubſtitute a principle of godly ſincerity? Who of old commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs? What power was it that raiſed Jeſus Chriſt from the dead? Sinner! bluſh, be confounded, be alarmed at the dangerous, the impious thought of aſcribing to *thyſelf* what GOD claims as *his own* exalted, ſovereign prerogative.

§ 14. In treating on the obligations of men to receive the goſpel, and the univerſality of the rectoral deſign of redemption therewith connected, I took occaſion to produce from a reſpectable writer ſome expreſs arguments on that ſide of the queſtion. It is but fair that he ſhould now be heard on the other ſide; as it is exactly conducive to my deſign. Thus, then, Mr. POLHILL: "GOD eternally reſolved with himſelf that he would have a church and a peculiar people, and *Chriſt gave himſelf for it*, THAT *he might ſanctify and cleanſe it* with the waſhing of water by the word, THAT *he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious church* without ſpot or wrinkle, Eph. v. 25—27. *He gave himſelf for us* THAT *he might redeem us from all iniquity* and purify to

to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14. If Chriſt had given himſelf *thus far* for all, all would have been his church and people. You will ſay, Unbelief is the only obſtacle. I anſwer, that if Chriſt had *given himſelf* for all, THAT *he might waſh them as he waſhes the church*, and redeem them from all iniquity *as* he redeems his peculiar ones, there would have been no ſuch thing as unbelief left among men; that Chriſt, who *waſhes out* EVERY *ſpot and wrinkle*, would not have left *unbelief*. — Hence, proportionably to their election, they are ſaid to be redeemed from among men, Rev. xiv. 4. And *redeemed out of* every kindred and tongue and people and nation, chap. v. 9. Now how is it *poſſible* that *all* men ſhould be thus redeemed? Chriſt's death as it reſpects all men, redeems them (as I may ſo ſay) from among devils, for that it renders them capable of mercy which devils are not; but Chriſt's death as it reſpects the elect redeems them even *from among men*, for that it procures faith for them, and thereby pulls them out of the unbelieving world; and what is *peculiar* redemption if this be not?

"You will ſay, He would have fulfilled them [the *ſpecial* abſolute promiſes] in all, but that men themſelves will not: But what a ſtrange word is this — *they will not!* Will they not, if GOD give them a will, a new heart and a new ſpirit? Will they not, if GOD take away the nilling and reſiſting principle, the heart of ſtone? Will they not, if GOD write his laws in their hearts and inward parts? O what is this, but an abſurd blaſphemy to change GOD's truth into a lie, his omnipotence into weakneſs,

weakneſs, and his glory into the old broken idol of creature-freedom? Surely if GOD, who is truth and power, engage to make a new heart, the old one cannot hinder it; if he promiſe to remove hardneſs, hardneſs cannot reſiſt it.—The Father's purpoſe, as the ſcriptures hold forth, clearly was, that his Son ſhould be a king, a captain, a ſhepherd, an huſband, an head and a father: and what is a king without ſubjects, a captain without ſoldiers, a ſhepherd without a flock, an huſband without a ſpouſe, an head without a body, and a father without poſterity? Empty names are below him whoſe *name is above every name.* Wherefore this King muſt have a Sion, *a mountain of holineſs* to reign in, Pſalm ii. 6. This captain a militia, *an army with banners* to fight under him, Cant. vi. 4. This ſhepherd a flock *to hear his voice and follow him*, John x. 4. This huſband a ſpouſe, *a queen in gold of Ophir married to him*, Pſal. xlv. 9. This head *a body to be animated with his ſpirit and filled with his life*, Col. i. 18. And this father a numerous iſſue, begotten and brought forth into the ſpiritual world to honour and ſerve him, Heb. ii. 13.—Indeed there is no man living on the earth, but, if he did really believe, he ſhould have *the rivers of living water, the ſpirit of holineſs flowing in his heart*, John vii. 38. but the elect were deſtined and *choſen in Chriſt to be holy*, Eph. i. 4. and Chriſt ſanctified himſelf in a ſpecial manner for them, *that they might be ſanctified*, εν αληθειᾳ, *in truth*, actually and truly, John xvii. 19.—Others may have heaven upon believing, but theſe *ſhall certainly arrive* at it, theſe are *the ſheep*, to which Chriſt gives eternal

eternal life, John x. 28. theſe are *the ſons*, which without fail ſhall be brought to glory, Heb. ii. 10. — Some men do believe, when others draw back, and whence comes this diſtinguiſhing faith? either it comes merely of man's free will, or of GOD's free grace; if we ſay the firſt, 'tis the very mire and dirt of Pelagianiſm, 'tis to ſet up free will as an idol to caſt lots upon Chriſt's blood, whether any one perſon in the world ſhall be ſaved thereby or not: if we ſay the latter, then GOD and Chriſt had a *ſpecial* eye upon ſome above others; for GOD ordained, that Chriſt ſhould be the grand *medium* to ſalvation, and that faith ſhould be the only way to Chriſt: If then he gave Chriſt for all, and faith but to ſome, it is becauſe he did in a *ſpecial* way *intend* their ſalvation, and conſequently Chriſt (who came to do his Father's will) had in his death a *ſpecial* reſpect to them. — Wherefore I will ſhut up all with that of an ancient: *Although Chriſt died for all, yet for us he ſuffered in an* ESPECIAL *manner, becauſe for the church he ſuffered.*" *

§ 15. "I demand," ſays Dr. WHITBY, "when "they ſay Chriſt died for all, ſo far as to procure "pardon and ſalvation for them *if they will believe* "*and repent*, whether he died to procure pardon "and ſalvation on a condition, which it was *poſ-* "*ſible*, upon that aſſiſtance which he would vouch-"ſafe

* BOZHILL on the Divine Will, p. 322—346. Etſi Chriſtus *pro omnibus* mortuus eſt, *pro nobis* tamen *ſpecialiter* paſſus eſt, quia pro eccleſia paſſus eſt. AMBROS. Lib. VI. Luc. cap. vii.

" ſafe them, to perform? or only upon a condition " which to them was *impoſſible*, for want of grace " ſufficient for them to perform? If the latter " only, it is certain that he died not at all for them; " for what is only done on an impoſſible ſuppoſi- " tion, is not done at all." Were the doctrine contained in this objection admitted, a doctrine with which every part of our author's book abounds, it would at once remove all juſt views of moral obligation; and prove ſubverſive of religion both natural and revealed. Only reflect, if to love GOD ſupremely, for inſtance, be a duty incumbent on a rational being, as ſuch, through every ſtate of his exiſtence; if in every ſtate he has *capacity*, *means*, and *freedom* ſo to love him, as the ground of the obligation; if the very idea of accountableneſs implies a liableneſs to break that obligation; and if, moreover, a moral aptitude to obey is weakened by diſobedience, it irrefragably follows, that the obligation of that being to love GOD is not in proportion to the *degree* of *poſſibility* of performance. Beſides, at the *very time* that a wicked man *hates* GOD, is he not *obliged* to *love* him? And yet this is confeſſedly *impoſſible*. When a man is in a violent fit of paſſion, is he not under obligation of being temperate, mild and meek, however impoſſible the compliance? To introduce the conſideration of *grace* — " for want of grace ſufficient for them," — is totally impertinent; for to ſay that a man is not *obliged* except he has *grace*, is little ſhort of contradiction in terms. At this rate, the more indiſpoſed men are, through cuſtom in the practice of iniquity, the more excuſeable;

able; and without grace they are not obliged at all. That is, the *more* a man hates his Maker, the *leſs* obliged he is to love him!

"It hath been repreſented as a great abſurdity "to think that Chriſt died *equally* for Judas and "for Peter; but without any ſhew of reaſon that I "can diſcern: for did not the ſoul of Judas as "much proceed from the *Father of ſpirits*, as the "ſoul of Peter? Was it not equally made after "GOD's image?"* But if GOD was bound in equity, that is, obliged at all, to ſhew favour to Judas as much as to Peter becauſe the *offspring* of GOD, and made after his *image*, we may ſay, that *Satan* is entitled to an equal ſhare. "Did it [the ſoul of Judas] come out of his [GOD's] hands *more unworthy of mercy* than the ſoul of Peter?" The phraſe "unworthy of mercy," if it has any meaning at all, conveys an abſurd meaning. That mercy, which is a branch of grace, is conferred according to worthineſs, is contradictory language. "Were not both born in equal circumſtances as to GOD's favour, in equal need of a Saviour, and equally capable of redemption?" Granted, in equal need, and equally capable; and equal alſo as to GOD's favour in point of *claim*; but how does this imply that GOD is *bound* to ſhew no difference as a Sovereign? "Why therefore, antecedently to any "good or evil they had done, ſhould this Saviour "die more, or rather for the one, than for the "other?" It is granted that the Saviour died neither more nor rather, for the one, than for the

* *Diſcourſe*, p. 105.

other, as a *mean* of ſalvation; as a *medium of moral government:* but does it follow that this mean *muſt not* be rendered effectual to Peter rather than to Judas? If both alike refuſe compliance with the proffered mercy, is it inequitable that one ſhould be "made willing in the day of divine power?"

"To make Chriſt procure both the promiſe and "the condition, by the ſame act and paſſion, is to "turn *the conditional* covenant into one that is *abſo-* "*lute:* For what is procured already for me, God "is *in equity bound* to give me without my doing "any thing to procure it." This objection abſurdly ſuppoſes that the chriſtian covenant requires of us the performance of a condition *without* gracious aids; otherwiſe, the objector muſt allow that the efficacy of the condition is procured, as all gracious aids are, which invalidates the objection. In reality, the ſame covenant is abſolute in one reſpect, while conditional in another. In virtue of Chriſt's atonement an *abſolute teſtamentary grant* is made to all who hear the goſpel; which is "glad tidings of great joy to all people." But the ſalutary *poſſeſſion* of the bleſſings themſelves, depends, as far as the equity of moral government is concerned, on the condition of accepting the favours thus propoſed. And yet, *in fact*, if the condition itſelf were not made effectual by ſovereign grace, not one ſoul would ever be ſaved. Thus Chriſt as Mediator procures *means* of ſalvation for all; but as a ſurety beſtows the *grace* of faith and repentance. He ſhed his *blood* with the rectoral deſign of ſaving *ſinners*; he beſtows his quickening *ſpirit* on *elect* ſinners only, who

who alſo were the objects eſpecially regarded in his atoning death. — *What is procured for me, God is in equity bound to give me.* Yes, God is bound to execute his wiſe and gracious purpoſes, without my leave! Or, he graciouſly appointed a propitiatory ſacrifice, by virtue of which the Prieſt who offered it might claim the application of that ſacrifice, with reſpect to me for whom he became ſurety, without waiting for my fulfilment of the condition in my own ſtrength! A glorious truth this, in the belief of which every one who has made even but a ſmall proficiency in ſelf-knowledge will exult.

"If Chriſt hath abſolutely procured this faith "and repentance for the elect, they cannot be *con-* "*ditions* to be performed on their part, but to be "*given* on God's part." * This objection is founded on a great fallacy, *viz.* that the ſame thing cannot be, in different reſpects, both a *gift* and a *duty*. Chriſt is exalted to *give* repentance unto Iſrael as well as the remiſſion of ſins; but to *repent* is theirs, whether we conſider it under the notion of a duty or a condition. We are ſaid to be ſaved by grace, through *faith*, and *that* not of ourſelves, but the *gift* of God; nevertheleſs the act of *believing* is ours, whether you call it a duty or a condition. The *ability*, or gracious principle, is from God; but the *act itſelf*, whether it be repenting, believing, hoping, rejoicing, or any other gracious act, is *ours*. Were not the former true, who could be ſaved? And without the latter, there would be

* *Ibid.* p. 109.

no moral character in actions; and how ſhould God judge the world?

§ 16. "Either God gives this ſuppoſed purchaſe of faith and repentance to the elect by a peculiar, divine, and irreſiſtible aſſiſtance, or only by ſuch aid and grace as is *common* to them with others who are not elected; if by the latter only, then is there nothing purchaſed more for them than for others with them, becauſe nothing more is given to them than what is common to them with others; if by an aſſiſtance which is peculiar to them, and cannot be reſiſted by them, then are not any others to be charged with guilt for not repenting and believing, becauſe it is impoſſible that they ſhould do ſo without that ſpecial and irreſiſtible aſſiſtance which God will not vouchſafe unto them: and ſo they do not believe and repent, not becauſe they *will not* do what they could do, but becauſe they *cannot* do it were they never ſo willing." * This is but a *ſpecimen* of paſſages unnumbered to the ſame purpoſe in our Author's book before me; a ſpecimen however of extreme miſrepreſentation. *If by an aſſiſtance which is peculiar, then others are not chargeable with guilt.* This inference, urged ſo frequently, has been refuted before; and ſtands on the gratuitous aſſumption, that in the preſent caſe the ground of obligation is the *moral ability* and not the *moral means* for the performance of duty. Strange! that none are chargeable with guilt, if they have not peculiar

* *Ibid.* p. 109.

peculiar grace. But *why* are they not chargeable with guilt? *Becauſe it is impoſſible that they ſhould repent and believe without ſpecial aſſiſtance.* How *impoſſible? not becauſe they* WILL NOT, *but becauſe they* CANNOT *were they never ſo willing.* Abhorred be the thought by me, which is here falſely aſcribed to Calviniſm. I believe it is pretty uniformly maintained by Calviniſts, that there is a very important diſtinction to be made between *moral* and *natural* inability; and that the *moral only* is culpable. The very reverſe therefore is the true ſtatement: *not becauſe they* CANNOT *were they never ſo willing, but becauſe they* WILL NOT. "Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power." "For it is GOD who worketh in us *to will*" what is good. The immediate influence of grace is on the *diſpoſition*, the ſource of all voluntary actions; were *this* therefore always good there would be no miſtake in thoſe actions. So far are we from ſuppoſing that the *impoſſibility* of believing and repenting ſhould be reſolved into a "CANNOT, *were they never ſo willing*," that we ſuppoſe what is diametrically oppoſite, *viz.* that the *only* effect of gracious *peculiar influence* is the removal of a *moral* inablity and not a *natural*; a *will not* more properly than a *cannot.* If any grace *ſhort* of what is peculiar to ſome, or ſpecial, were *in fact* ſufficient, even in any one inſtance, to effect a *willingneſs* of mind, that is, a mind *willing* in proportion to its *natural* ability; there would be ſome force in our Author's objection: but as neither ſcripture nor right reaſon do juſtify ſuch an inference, to deny *ſpecial* grace is the ſame as to deny

that there are ſuch things as *repenting* and *believing* in the world. Who ever could or can produce an *inſtance* of a ſinner actually repenting and believing for ſalvation without *peculiar* influence? What ſcripture, what reaſon, can encourage ſuch a concluſion? —However it is added:

"Faith being an aſſent to a divine teſtimony "upon ſufficient evidence, without which evidence "we cannot aſſent to it; and when we have it, we "cannot but aſſent; to ſay this faith requires on "GOD's part a ſpecial, divine, and irreſiſtible aſſiſt-"ance proper to the elect, is to excuſe all others "from believing, as having no ſufficient evidence "to do ſo, although the goſpel is as well revealed "to them as it is to the elect." * What ſophiſtical quibbling upon the terms "*ſufficient evidence.*" Faith is indeed "an aſſent to a divine teſtimony upon *ſufficient evidence*, without which evidence we *cannot* aſſent to it;" but the *evidence* itſelf, and the *ſufficiency* of it, are *objective* only in this definition, elſe it has no meaning but what is moſt abſurd. That evidence which is *inſufficient* for faith, and by reaſon of which man is *excuſeable*, is an *objective defect*; concerning which a man may *truly* ſay: "I *cannot* believe if I *would*, for I have no rational ground of belief; the thing I am required to believe is not *credible.*" But if he declares only what he *thinks* to be inſufficient evidence, when to a more upright mind it appears to be ſufficient, as it *really* is; who can ſuppoſe that his *thinking* it to be inſufficient will *excuſe* him? What can be plainer, than

* *Ibid.* p. 110.

than that our Lord's *miracles* were a "*ſufficient* evidence" *objectively*, for the conviction of the Jews who believed not; though *ſubjectively*, or as evidince exiſting in their minds, they were inſufficient? But could they juſtly plead *excuſe* for want of the latter? How abſurd to imagine it. — *When we have ſufficient evidence, we cannot but aſſent.* Here the terms "ſufficient evidence" muſt needs be taken in a quite different ſenſe from that which they occupied a little before. When we have ſufficient *ſubjective* evidence, it is true we cannot but aſſent; but the want of *this* is no excuſe, elſe there could be no ſuch thing as criminal infidelity. The idea of *ſpecial grace being conferred on ſome, excuſing others*, is too impertinent to deſerve a refutation. Pardon and life are propoſed to all; all are of themſelves averſe to the propoſal; but if ſome are *made willing* by an operation *peculiar* to them; in the name of every thing logical, and every thing ſacred, how can this be a ground of excuſe for the averſion or *unwillingneſs* of the others?

§ 17. It is urged: "When the kindneſs de-
"ſigned by Chriſt's death to all upon the condi-
"tions of the goſpel is expreſſed, it is ſaid Chriſt
"died for all; ſo when the effect and benefit of it
"is expreſſed, the word *many* is moſt proper; for
"his blood ſhed procures remiſſion of ſins only to
"*penitent believers*, and in this ſenſe Chriſt gave
"his life a ranſom only for many, even as many as
"would believe and obey his goſpel." * Not to

* *Ibid.* p. 113.

inſiſt on the apparent impropriety of ſuppoſing that the word "*many*" expreſſes — not the objects whoſe *peculiar* advantages were decretively intended by the death of Chriſt, but — thoſe who performed certain *conditions*, and thereby partook of its effects; as if the *extent* of the *ranſom* depended on an *after* condition; the chief queſtion here is, From what *ſource* proceeds the *light* and *love*, the ſubjective evidence and willingneſs, in virtue of which the required condition is fulfilled? Of what uſe is it to contend for a *condition*, which, though not *naturally* impoſſible, it is morally certain no one ever did or will perform, but as influenced ſupernaturally? It is demonſtrable, from conſiderations that need not now be adduced, that if the condition of *believing*, *repenting*, and *obeying* be performed at all, it is by *divine aſſiſtance*; and ſeeing that aſſiſtance is not calculated to remove any *natural* but only a *moral* imbecility, the ſuppoſed aſſiſtance of what our Author ſtiles "common grace" which does not produce the *moral effect*, does not appear to have any exiſtence, for, *de non apparentibus et de non exiſtentibus eadem valet ratio*. If the genuine effects of a *principle* do not appear (and while no infallible teſtimony to the fact can be urged,) we are fairly authorized to conclude that no ſuch principle exiſts.

"Though it be certain that Chriſt died *intention-*
"*ally* for *all*, i. e. deſigning the benefits of his ſalu-
"tary paſſion for them, *upon their performance* of
"the conditions of the new covenant, eſtabliſhed in
"his blood; yet is it alſo true that he *eventually* is
"the Saviour of his body, and died *only* for his
"ſheep

" ſheep and friends, becauſe they only do perform " the conditions of the new covenant; and there- " fore to them only can this righteous Judge at " laſt aſſign the bleſſings promiſed in that cove- " nant." * It is granted that Chriſt's intention, *rectorally*, was to die for all; and it is alſo agreed, that he *eventually*, (and therefore, I conclude, *decretively*; becauſe the *event* in all caſes, as far as it participates of goodneſs and entity, is an exact indication of a correſponding decree;) Chriſt eventually is the Saviour of his body, and died *only* for his ſheep and friends; who, *in fact*, perform the conditions of the new covenant, and to whom only the righteous Judge will aſſign the promiſed bleſſings. The remaining but very important difference therefore is, that the one ſide of the queſtion aſcribes the diſtinguiſhing effect to peculiar diſtinguiſhing grace; that is, to a cauſe which is adequate to the effect: while the other ſide aſcribes it to a ſuppoſed grace that is not peculiar; that is, to an inadequate cauſe. In a word, the latter makes the greateſt good and happineſs of man, that which makes him *immediately* to differ from another, to originate in *himſelf*; but the latter aſcribes all valuable difference to *God*, whether ultimately or immediately, that which infallibly ensures the right determination of the will not excepted.

But it is again aſſerted: " If ſalvation by Chriſt " can be obtained only by the elect, the reſidue of " thoſe to whom the goſpel is revealed can have no " *means ſufficient* for ſalvation." And, " if men have

* *Ibid.* p. 114.

" have not ſufficient means to be ſaved by the " covenant of grace, then have they only means " given them to increaſe their condemnation, yea " ſuch means which they *cannot but uſe* to their " greater and more heavy puniſhment." * On the contrary, we inſiſt that the *annunciation* and *propoſal* of Chriſt, the bleſſings of redemption, and the completion thereof in life eternal, are *ſufficient means* for ſalvation; and if we admit of the language — " they *cannot* but uſe them to their condemnation," — it is preciſely in the ſame ſenſe as " they *will not*." If a man were *of himſelf* but *willing* to improve the means, in that caſe, I acknowledge, a peculiar influence would be unneceſſary; if he were well diſpoſed to repent, believe, obey, and actually performed the conditions required, then ſpecial grace would be uſeleſs; but ſcripture rightly underſtood, and the ſoundeſt principles of reaſon, are unacquainted with any ſuch power in the human mind. We conſider men as *unable* only in a *moral* ſenſe, which is their *crime*; it is the inability of an atheiſtical ſcoffer, who ſays in his heart there is no GOD; of a reſolute deiſt, who pretends he has no ſufficient evidence of the truth of revealed religion; of an obſtinate Jew, who rejects with paſſionate abhorrence the religion and meſſiahſhip of Jeſus; of a man who ſincerely loves the world in its maxims, cuſtoms, manners and enjoyments, but *cannot* find it in his heart to love GOD, that is, *will not* love him. In a word, it is the inability of a man to love his neighbour as himſelf, when he has all the reaſons con-

* *Ibid.* p. 161.

conceiveable for doing it: he has underſtanding and will, or the *capacity* of intellect and volition; he has commands and encouragements, the authority of God in the Old and New Teſtaments; he has every proſpect of ſuperior advantage by complying rather than refuſing; he has every inducement from the character and conduct of his neighbour, a good, benevolent, generous man who has conferred upon him many undeſerved favours; in ſhort, he has moral *means* both ſuitable and ſufficient for loving his neighbour as himſelf; and withal he poſſeſſeth full *freedom* to hate him or not; but notwithſtanding *cannot* love him, that is, the envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableneſs of his heart are ſo ſtrong that he *will not*, finds no *inclination* to compliance with duty, much leſs pleaſure and delight in it. Is this man *criminal*, or is he not? If not, there is no ſuch thing exiſting as a crime or a moral ſyſtem; if he is, we aſk no more, the objection is annihilated. If his condemnation is increaſed by the goſpel, is it not alſo *increaſed* if he perſiſts in acts of immorality againſt the remonſtrances of conſcience and *reaſon*? If a benevolent man undertakes to *reaſon* with his neighbour about the ſinfulneſs, dangerous conſequences, and numerous inconveniences of *drunkenneſs*; but this neighbour, notwithſtanding, does not ſubmit to the evidence produced, nor abandon his evil courſes: but it is plain that, on the one hand, the benevolence of the reprover is not leſſened by the ill ſucceſs that followed his endeavours; and, on the other, the condemnation of the obſtinate offender is increaſed. In no other ſenſe do we conſider the

the *inability* of a man to repent and believe; an inability which the greater it is, the more means, motives or inducements it is capable of refiſting, the more criminal. — But one of the moſt plauſible objections is the following:

§ 18. "Sure it is no ſin in the creature not to "do that which can alone be done by the almighty "power of GOD, and which cannot be done with- "out that proper act of GOD he never would afford "to them; for then it muſt be the ſin of man not "to be GOD — for not being equal in power with "GOD himſelf. Then muſt every impenitent and "unbelieving perſon have a juſt excuſe, and a ſuf- "ficient plea why he ſhould not be puniſhed, or "condemned for his iniquity and unbelief; and "they might cry to GOD as did the officers of the "Jews to Pharaoh, *Wherefore dealeſt thou thus with thy "ſervants? There is no ſtraw, and thou ſayeſt to us, "Make bricks*; no ſpecial grace, no divine energy "afforded us, and thou ſayeſt to us, Do that, which "can no more be done without it than men can "make bricks without ſtraw, and *thy ſervants are "beaten, but the fault is in him* who denies us ſtraw, "and yet requires bricks; yea, who requires that "faith and that repentance which he never would "afford us *means ſufficient* to perform." * However plauſible this objection may appear to the unwary, it is nevertheleſs fraught with genuine abſurdities.

1. It is involved in that very abſurd conſequence which it would unjuſtly fix on the doctrine of ſpecial

* *Ibid.* p. 163.

cial grace, *viz.* that man muſt be equal in power with God himſelf. It has been before demonſtrated that a power of doing good in the creature is not inherent but *borrowed*; which ariſes from our abſolute dependence upon God in *operation* as well as being. But the objection ſuppoſes that we have *ſome power* which is *not* borrowed, otherwiſe *all power* and the *cauſe* of *every good* would be aſcribed to him. Real power belongs only to the independent God. Whereas abſolute univerſal dependence, paſſive power tending to defection and nihility, on the one hand, and an obediential power adapted to receive any divine impreſſion, on the other, is eſſential to a creature. Therefore to require in man a *ſource of power* to believe, repent, &c. without the immediate influence and efficiency of God, is to require that in him which is peculiar to God; that is, equality in power with God himſelf.

2. The objection ſuppoſes that in order to render man accountable he ſhould poſſeſs in *himſelf* an expedient whereby he may avoid the inconveniences attending paſt tranſgreſſion. It ſeems, if by ſin he has brought upon himſelf ſuch a moral impotence as prevents his believing and repenting, he is not chargeable with unbelief and impenitence! What is this but to ſay, Men may ſin with impunity; or, Men are not accountable except God *removes* their moral impotence by his grace! This is in effect to cavil at, not ſo much ſome particular tenets of chriſtianity, as the right of God to form a ſtrictly equitable moral ſyſtem. For to ſuch a ſyſtem, *liableneſs* to ſin is eſſential; and to ſin belongs guilt,

guilt, moral impotence and natural evil; but to ſay, as the objection implies, that a man is not *culpable* in not loving GOD, for inſtance, without *grace* to remove his moral depravity, is an abſurdity beneath contempt.

3. Not leſs futile is the compariſon between GOD's conduct, on our hypotheſis, toward ſinners, and that of Pharaoh towards the oppreſſed Iſraelites. Our Author is peculiarly fond of this alluſion, for he elſewhere ſays: "GOD's grace they ſay is free, and "he is not obliged to give it. I anſwer, this is "true, if he doth not require that which *cannot* be "performed without it; but to exact what I can "never do without it under the moſt dreadful "penalties, and yet deny that *grace*, is to act like "thoſe Egyptian taſkmaſters, who called for brick, "when they allowed no ſtraw." * The objection intended by this compariſon ſuppoſes, that GOD requires of ſinners what he gives them no *ſufficient means* of performing. But how glaring is the miſrepreſentation here made of our hypotheſis! Do our ſentiments, fairly ſtated, imply any *deficiency* of *moral means* to thoſe who are not the ſubjects of ſpecial grace? No ſuch thing. They are *equally* partakers of moral inducements; equally the objects of commands and threatenings, invitations and promiſes; to them as well as others are repreſentations made of heaven and hell, bleſſing and curſing, happineſs and woe. Surely, if a man perſiſts in his unbelief and impenitence after being told plainly, reaſoned with, encouraged, warned, and threatened, concerning

* *Ibid.* p. 190.

concerning his preſent danger and future fate, is it not moſt *equitable* that he ſhould ſuffer what he ſo diſregarded? Does not conſcience witneſs that he *deſerves* to be miſerable? Can he expect to be ſpared who does not ſpare himſelf? or to be ſaved, who neglects ſo great ſalvation? Can he juſtly hope for heaven whoſe conſcience teſtifies that he made light of it, when propoſed to him?

4. If the plea of the objection were valid, another abſurd conſequence would follow; *viz.* That the damned in hell might have it in their power to juſtify all their hatred of God and their blaſphemies. God *requires* of them the contrary tempers; otherwiſe there would be no crimes; that is, there would be no bad tempers in hell, no ſtate anſwering to that name. But if there are thoſe odious tempers in devils and human ſpirits who people the regions of deſpair; and if God requires the *oppoſite* tempers of all the ſubjects of his moral government, as he certainly does, what a pity they do not appoint a delegate to preſent the following declaration: "Where-
"fore dealeſt thou thus with thy ſervants? there is
"no ſtraw given us, and thou ſayeſt to us, Make
"bricks; no ſpecial grace, no divine energy afford-
"ed us, and thou ſayeſt to us, Do that, which can
"no more be done without it than men can make
"bricks without ſtraw, and thy ſervants are beaten,
"but the fault is in *him* who denies us ſtraw, and
"yet requires bricks." On reflection I am perſuaded there is not a demon in hell (whatever liberties we mortals take) that could venture to preſent it as the dictate of his real feelings.

§ 19. Not

§ 19. Not much better is the following plea: "Should a phyſician come to a patient, whoſe "ſtomach was ſo weakened through his intemper- "ance or luſt, that it could bear no ſtrong meat, "and his feet ſo enfeebled that he could ſcarce "walk from his couch to his bed-ſide, and profeſs "an earneſt deſire to cure his diſtempers, and pro- "miſe him recovery, provided he would follow his "preſcriptions, might it not reaſonably be expect- "ed he ſhould preſcribe ſuch means for his re- "covery that it was *poſſible* for him in this condition "to make uſe of? If then he ſhould enjoin him to "eat, and to digeſt the ſtrongeſt meats, and walk "ſome hours in the fields, becauſe he formerly "could do ſo before he fell into this diſability and "feebleneſs, would not all men pronounce him a "deluding cheat, and one that hypocritically and "inſincerely pretended his recovery, and promiſed "it with equal vanity and folly, intending only to "inſult over his preſent miſery: And yet this is the "repreſentation of our gracious GOD in this affair "which theſe men offer to us."* So then GOD and his righteous law, ſubmiſſive, muſt bow to the depraved *inclination* of the tranſgreſſor! According to this wonderfully complaiſant doctrine, Pharaoh, Judas, Demas, &c. were *obliged* no further than they were *well diſpoſed* to obey; and becauſe pride, covetouſneſs, and love of the world had *diſabled* them, it was quite *wrong* to require of them faith in GOD's teſtimony, and repentance for their crimes; for why? this was to "enjoin them to eat, and to digeſt

* *Ibid.* p. 167.

digeſt the ſtrongeſt meats," which they were *unable*, that is, indiſpoſed or *unwilling* to do. The real fact is, that our Author here, as every where elſe, moſt injudiciouſly and unfairly confounds natural and moral impotence, and then argues from the one to the other; not reflecting, that corporeal diſeaſes deſerve our pity, as what the patient cannot avoid *if he would*; but mental diſeaſes, as pride, unbelief, impenitence, hatred of GOD, and the love of ſin, deſerve our *deteſtation*, becauſe *if they would* men might avoid them. Chriſt has died, and the Spirit is offered to them through his mediation, but they out of deliberate choice obſtinately refuſe the kindly intended benefits; *whoſe damnation is juſt.*

§ 20. It is again urged: "We find our bleſſed "Saviour marvelling at the unbelief of his own "people; for *he marvelled at their unbelief.* Now, "can he who knows they could not believe by "reaſon of the diſability they had contracted by "the ſin of Adam, wonder that they did not what "it was *impoſſible* for them to do? Again, when he "heard the anſwer of the centurion, *he marvelled*, "*ſaying, Verily I have not found ſo great faith, no not "in Iſrael*; but *if this faith*, whenever it is wrought "in any, *is the effect of an almighty power*, what "reaſon could he have to marvel, that it *was* found "where that almighty power was exerted, or that "it was *not* found where the ſame power was with-"held?" Of all the abſurd objections contained in this magazine of genuine Arminianiſm, none

need be more ſo than the preſent. According to this objection, *miracles* are not to be *marvelled* at; but ſhould be regarded with an eye of *indifference!* In reply to this objection, obſerve:

1. We conſider faith, as a branch of the divine *life*, or as a *gift*, in the claſs of thoſe interpoſitions of GOD that may well be termed *miraculous*; but as a *duty*, or the voluntary *exertion* of that life, it may naturally be *expected* where the divine teſtimony is moſt explicit, and the means of grace moſt abundant. Thus GOD of old: *Now, O inhabitants of Jeruſalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it ſhould bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?* * Thus the fruits of righteouſneſs were not according to the *means* afforded, which was the proper ground of criminality. That the daughter of Zion, who had been betrothed unto the Lord in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and in loving kindneſs, and in mercies, ſhould go after Baalim, burn incenſe to them, and forget JEHOVAH, was a fact comparatively *marvellous*. So here, it was a thing greatly to be *marvelled* at that the *Jews*, to whom were committed the *oracles* of GOD, who were Iſraelites, to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the *teſtaments*, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice of GOD and the promiſes; whoſe were the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the fleſh Chriſt came, who is over all, GOD bleſſed forever; that *theſe* people, ſo highly privileged, ſhould *diſbelieve* a teſtimony ſupported by

* Iſaiah v. 3, 4.

by ſuch evidence: while the *centurion*, a heathen ſoldier who had no ſuch privileges, exhibited a fact no leſs marvellous in receiving with humble readineſs what they haughtily rejected.

2. The objection is founded on the unſcriptural, unreaſonable, we may add, ungrateful notion, That *faith* as a grace, or the life of GOD in the ſoul, is *not* the effect of an almighty power. What can be more oppoſite to the whole current of revealed truth! The true chriſtian temper, which is the root of faith, is (καινὴ κτίσις) *a new creation*; * a new birth, a *birth from heaven*, the effect of ſovereign almighty energy; † the produce of (ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυναμεως) *the excellency of power*; ‡ a power ſimilar to that which created the world, and cauſed the light to ſhine out of darkneſs; a power not leſs *miraculous*, or ſuperior to the common laws of nature and unaided influence of moral means, than the reſurrection from the dead. ‖ It appears to me not a little parodoxical, that any ſhould *admit* of an almighty power to be exerted in raiſing the *body* to future life; an exertion totally different from that which preſerves and gives energy to the mechaniſm of the univerſe, or eſtabliſhed general laws of matter and motion, cauſes and effects; and yet *deny* the need of ſuch a power to raiſe the *ſoul* to ſpiritual life and happineſs. They who cavil at the doctrines of grace, as explained by the orthodox, and yet believe the reſurrection of the body, may well be ſaid *to ſtrain out a gnat*

* 2 Cor. v. 17. † John iii. 3, 5, 8. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 7. ‖ John v. 27—27.

and ſwallow down a camel. But a fuller diſcuſſion of this point belongs to the next head of diſcourſe; to which we now proceed.

§ 21. (III.) *Special Grace.* Notwithſtanding the contemptuous manner in which Dr. WHITBY ſpeaks of *faith* as "the effect of an almighty power;" when treating of *ſufficient and effectual, common and ſpecial grace*, he makes the following conceſſion: "Beſides this calling of men to the profeſſion of "the chriſtian faith, and this vouchſafement of "the goſpel to them as a rule of life; it ſeems "neceſſary to aſſert that GOD vouchſafes *ſome in-* "*ward operations or aſſiſtances to incline them to what* "*is good, and work converſion in them*;" * and, what is ſtill more extraordinary, he produceth ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture in favour of that aſſertion. But alas! all this parade of conceſſions and proofs is followed by numberleſs flagrant contradictions. What he builds with one hand he pulls down with the other; and that with violence. What he before called "*inward operations*" are now nothing more than GOD's *exhortations*. One while it is conceded that there is a divine illumination, a divine impreſſion on the mind, and GOD ſpeaking inwardly to man; but before you are aware, all is converted into moral perſuaſion. Let us hear his own words: "I aſſert that the *manner* in which GOD's grace and "Holy Spirit acts upon the minds and hearts of men "for production of the fruits of the good Spirit, and "the preparatory diſpoſitions of the ſoul towards them,

* *Diſcourſe*, p. 206.

" them, may reaſonably be conceived to be ſuch " as is *ſuitable* to the reaſon and faculties of men, " the underſtanding and the will." Granted; for who would plead for a mode of operation which is *unſuitable?* " Now it is certain that what natural- " ly *makes the underſtanding to perceive*, is *evidence* " *propoſed and apprehended*, conſidered or adverted " to;" but who makes the blind to ſee or the dull to apprehend? " for nothing elſe can be requiſite " to make us come to the knowledge of the truth " — and ſo be wiſe to ſalvation. — Again, what " makes the *will chooſe*, is ſomething *approved* by " the underſtanding, and conſequently appearing to " the ſoul as *good*; and whatſoever it *refuſeth*, is " ſomething repreſented by the underſtanding, " and ſo appearing to the will, as *evil:* whence all " that GOD requires of us is, and can be only this, " *to refuſe the evil and to chooſe the good.* — It there- " fore can be only requiſite, in order to theſe " ends, that the good Spirit ſhould *ſo illuminate* our " underſtandings, that we attending to, and con- " ſidering what lies before us, ſhould apprehend, " and be convinced of our duty; and that the bleſſ- " ings of the goſpel ſhould be *ſo propounded* to us, " as that we may diſcern them to be our chiefeſt " good, and the miſeries it threateneth, ſo as we " may be convinced they are the worſt of evils, " that we may chooſe the one and refuſe the " other." * But obſerve what follows: " Is it not " *a great diſparagement to the word of God* to ſay, " or think, that all his perſuaſions, admonitions,

* *Ibid.* p. 210, 211, 212.

" exhortations, promiſes, and threats, ſhould be " *inſufficient* to prevail with us to turn from our " ſinful courſes, and turn to him, when men who " uſe theſe methods towards their children, ſer- " vants, friends, or relations, do it in hopes that " they ſhall be ſucceſsful by theſe means?" * " If " beyond all this, there be ſome *phyſical and un-* " *fruſtrable operation on God's part* requiſite to make " men know, and knowing chooſe the good and " refuſe the evil; this being not vouchſafed to, or " wrought in them who are not born anew, *why is* " *the want of this new birth*, and this ſpiritual re- " generation ſo often *imputed to the voluntary want of* " *their conſideration*, and their not laying to heart " the things propounded to them? † — I therefore " humbly conceive that inward operation of the " Holy Spirit to conſiſt in theſe two things:

1ſt. " In repreſenting the divine truths which " holy ſcriptures do contain, and preſs upon us, " more clearly to our underſtandings, that we may " have a fuller evidence, ſtronger conviction, and " aſſurance of them.

2dly, " In bringing theſe truths to our remem- " brance, that ſo they may be preſent with us " when this is requiſite to enable us to reſiſt temp- " tations, and to encourage us to the performance " of our duty." ‡

The above cited extracts, contain a ſummary of the *Arminian* ſyſtem of grace, which is hardly any thing different from the *Pelagian*; I ſhall now preſent the reader with a conciſe account of the *orthodox* doctrine

* *Ibid.* p. 214. † *Ibid.* p, 218. ‡ *Ibid.* p 220.

doctrine on the ſame point, that he may the more eaſily compare their pretenſions. "Effectual call-
"ing is the work of GOD's almighty power and
"grace; whereby, out of his free and eſpecial love
"to his elect, and from nothing in them moving
"him thereunto, he doth, in his accepted time,
"invite and draw them to Jeſus Chriſt by his word
"and Spirit; ſavingly enlightening their minds,
"renewing, and powerfully determining their wills;
"ſo as they, although in themſelves dead in ſin,
"are hereby made willing and able, freely to
"anſwer his call, and to accept and embrace the
"grace offered and conveyed therein." * It cannot help occuring to the attentive intelligent reader, that the *former* ſummary is ultimately to this poſition, *viz.* What grace effects in a ſinner's converſion is nothing more than to *repreſent to the mind divine truths, by way of moral perſuaſion*; while the *diſpoſition* itſelf, or the *ability* to apprehend, conſider, and advert to the truths objectively preſented, is left uninfluenced. Whereas the *latter*, allowing the uſe but denying the ſufficiency of moral means, maintains the abſolute need of a *phyſical influence of the Holy Spirit on the diſpoſition itſelf, whereby it is made ſpiritual and holy*, in its meaſure conformable to the holy nature of GOD; and without which no repreſentation of truth, no moral perſuaſion whatever, will terminate in that change which is connected with ſalvation. *That*, after abſtracting what is common to the converted and unconverted, is reducible to the *ſelf ſufficiency* of the human will; *this*, to the *ſpecial influence* and

* *Larger Catechiſm* of the Aſſembly, ANS. to QUEST. LXVII.

ſovereign pleaſure of GOD. *The wind bloweth where it liſteth*, without conſulting thy pleaſure, *and thou heareſt the ſound thereof*, the effects are ſenſibly known, *but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*, its manner of operation is not perceived by thee; *ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.**— Having thus given the true ſtate of the queſtion in diſpute, what now remains is to examine Dr. WHITBY's principal objections againſt the Calviniſtic ſide, eſpecially in reference to any thing that might appear inconſiſtent with equity.

§ 22. "It muſt be granted, that in raiſing an "idea in my brain by the Holy Spirit, and the "impreſſion made upon it there, the action is "truly phyſical;—that in thoſe actions I am "wholly paſſive; that is, I myſelf do nothing for-"mally to produce theſe ideas, but the good Spirit, "without my operation, doth produce them in "me;—and that theſe operations muſt be irreſiſti-"ble in their production, becauſe they are immedi-"ately produced in us without our knowledge of "them, and without our will, and ſo without thoſe "faculties by which we are enabled to act. But "then I add, that as far as they are ſo, they can-"not be imputed to us; that is, it cannot be "praiſe-worthy in us, or rewardable, that we have "ſuch ideas raiſed in us, but only that when they are "thus raiſed in us we attend to them, comply with "them, and improve them to the ends for which "they were deſigned by the Holy Spirit.—Thoſe "ideas

* John iii. 8.

" ideas which are objectively good being thus " raiſed in us, cannot be imputed to us for reward, " nor can GOD be well pleaſed with us for them till " we co-operate with them, becauſe the raiſing of " them is properly GOD's, not our own action, and " we are purely paſſive in it, nor is it in our power " to prevent or reſiſt them; but then GOD having " planted in us a principle of reaſon and diſcretion, " we can attend to them when they are raiſed in us, " and ſo improve them to the illumination of our " underſtandings, and to the approbation of them in " our minds: he alſo having given us a will to chooſe " the good, and to refuſe the evil, we may conſent " to the good ſuggeſtions and purſue the good " motions thus raiſed in us; for to what other ends " can they be raiſed in us by the Holy Spirit?" * In reply to this very ſingular paſſage, I obſerve the following things:

1. If this account be any thing different from the mechaniſm of nature, or the doctrine of aſſociations, it is not only unſcriptural but alſo highly unphiloſophical. He cannot mean *that* doctrine, becauſe he treats of *grace*, a divine impulſe ſuperior to the courſe of nature effected by the *Holy Spirit*. Beſides, it would have been abſurd to introduce the doctrine of *common providence* (of which *aſſociations* make a part) under the title of *ſufficient grace*. And yet, if any thing be intended by our Author more than common providence, the ſentiment is unphiloſophical as well as unſcriptural, and wholly deſtitute of all probability. It ſuppoſes innumerable ſupernatural interpoſitions, and ſo *multiplies* princi-

ples,

* *Diſcourſe*, p. 221.

ples, which the propoſed effect does *not require*. What is the propoſed effect? To give us *ideas* of truths. And what are ideas but *repreſentations* in the mind of *objective archetypes?* But to ſuppoſe that any *other truths* or objective archetypes are *now* neceſſary, than what the ſcriptures of the Old and New Teſtaments contain, is to run into a labyrinth of myſticiſm and extravagance. If what we call our ideas of religious truths are not repreſentations of objects exhibited in the holy ſcriptures, they are unworthy of the name, as being either the deductions of unaſſiſted reaſon or the reveries of fancy. When Dr. WHITBY, therefore, talked of *an idea raiſed in his brain by the Holy Spirit, and the impreſſion made upon it there*, he talked of a figment of his own creation, and created for no other purpoſe than to throw it as duſt into weak eyes.

2. Seeing it is ſomething different from a natural and providential law that he ſpeaks of, the ſentiment ſuppoſes millions of miracles, daily and hourly, without anſwering any valuable end. No other end is pretended to be anſwered but that of giving each perſon an opportunity of exerting his freedom; but this he has by attending to the holy ſcriptures, which are ſufficient archetypes of all ideas relating to ſalvation, and without which he has no authority to conclude that his ideas are from GOD. If the revealed word exhibits life and immortality, grace and glory, to every ſoul that hears or peruſes it, and this renders men inexcuſable, nay is a *ſufficient mean* of ſalvation, what need is there

there of compaſſing the very ſame end by millions of miracles?

3. The above doctrine confounds revelation and the divine unction. The prophets and apoſtles, it is true, muſt have had repreſentations made in their minds of things not contained in preceding ſcriptures; but the unction from the Holy One teacheth us all things by changing the diſpoſition only. Nothing more, is neceſſary; nothing leſs, is a cauſe adequate to the effect. Beſide, if the *ne plus ultra* of grace be only to impreſs *ideas* (which is a mode of operation, I believe, perfectly unintelligible, when ſupernatural revelation is not intended) it is poſſible that not one ſinner would be ſaved; for, on the ſuppoſition, the Holy Spirit engages to do nothing more to one ſinner than another, and as *one* fails of ſalvation, for the ſame reaſon *all* might. And who can tell but the prophets and apoſtles have *ſuppreſſed* innumerable ideas given them by the Holy Spirit to be revealed to us? For on our Author's principles it would not be *juſt* to engage their *wills* reſpecting any *ideas*. Such is the genuine but wretched reſult of his novel *cerebroſian* hypotheſis!

4. The above doctrine, moreover, is very uncharitable in its conſequences. If all that the Holy Spirit does towards our ſalvation is merely "to raiſe ideas in the brain," what becomes of little children? Are none of them ſaved? If they are, does not the divine Spirit prepare them for glory? But how? Is it by *raiſing ideas in their brains*, leaving them to *chooſe* or to *refuſe*, to improve them and live, or to neglect them and periſh? And, indeed, with

with reſpect to adults, the conſequence would be equally deplorable, though not ſo glaringly ridiculous. If man in his beſt eſtate on earth is not ſupernaturally influenced in his *diſpoſition*, no ſuppoſed objective light in the underſtanding, no "ideas raiſed in the brain," no perſuaſion, will effect a new birth unto righteouſneſs. Without more aſſiſtance from the Holy Spirit than our Author is willing to allow, and ſuppoſing too that a right uſe of ideas is neceſſary to ſalvation, all men muſt periſh; for there is no *willing* that which is truly ſpiritual without ſuch aſſiſtance. *He worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure. We are not ſufficient of ourſelves to think a good thought*, much leſs to will, improve ideas, to love and embrace the truth repreſented. No one of himſelf is *diſpoſed* to co-operate with GOD, be the objective light and means ever ſo great, for this reaſon, that the mind being *depraved*, (as none can deny, however they may differ about the cauſe) the *real* good, in whatever light it is repreſented, will not *appear* to be ſo. The cure, therefore, muſt be more inward and *radical*.

Beſides, if GOD is bound in equity to deal alike with all his creatures *by impreſſing their brains*, it might be aſked, on our Author's own principles, how come ſuch numbers to fall ſhort of converſion? If it be ſaid, the impreſſion was not ſtrong enough to counteract their ſtronger depravity, how can they be blamed? Are they not left under the ſad *neceſſity* of periſhing becauſe the impreſſion was not *ſuperior* to the oppoſing principle. That there is an *oppoſi-*

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tion made is plain hence, that the ſcriptures are not ſufficient of themſelves, Dr. WHITBY being judge, without the Holy Spirit performing "*an action truly phyſical*" on the *brain* in order to converſion. GOD, it ſeems, would not be *juſt* in condemning men without this unintelligible operation! In a word, to ſay that GOD is bound in *equity* to perform on men a ſupernatural action truly *phyſical*, is equally deſtitute of truth and ſenſe; whereas it is expreſſive of both to ſay, that if men are converted and ſaved, there muſt be a phyſical change of the diſpoſition by an act of ſovereign favour, whereby the ſoul is enabled to improve its knowledge and all the means of ſalvation.

5. The ſentiment I am oppoſing involves a great miſtake about what is rewardable and praiſe-worthy, and what is not. It ſuppoſes that *actions alone* are ſo; whereas the truth is, that the *ſtate*, the *diſpoſition*, and *inclination* of the mind are not leſs rewardable or blameable than our actions. Nay, actions are no further praiſe-worthy than as they proceed from ſuch ſtate of mind. Were it otherwiſe, how can we account for GOD's blaming men for hardneſs of heart, carnality of mind, ſtupidity of conſcience, ſenſuality, and the like? And why promiſe to *change the heart*, and write his law there? In conſideration of what praiſe-worthy and rewardable *actions* are infants admitted into everlaſting bliſs? Is it more difficult for omnipotence to meliorate the heart of a ſinner, whether young or old, than to raiſe ideas in his brain? Or muſt we ſay, that it would be *inequitable?* The former none can aſſert. The latter is what

what none who admit of any *gracious* influence at all can conſiſtently plead.

6. To conclude, in a few words; our Author's hypotheſis is a wretched limitation of divine grace, which muſt not proceed to the *hearts* of ſinners; a pillar to ſupport pride, which diſdains to aſcribe to GOD what it fancies itſelf equal to; an edifice erected on a miſtaken idea of moral obligation, as if a phyſical act of grace were neceſſary for its baſis; and finally contains a contradiction in terms — GOD cannot be *juſt* in condemning ſinners, except he give them *grace*; the grace of certain *ideas* impreſſed upon their brains!

§ 23. "Some remonſtrants by granting this "neceſſity of *ſupernatural* and *infuſed habits*, ſeem "to have run themſelves into this *dilemma*, that "either theſe ſupernatural habits, *viz.* of faith and "charity, may be wrought in men, and yet they "may not be converted; or elſe that all who are "not converted are *therefore* not converted, be-"cauſe GOD's Spirit hath not wrought theſe habits "in them, which is the very abſurdity they labour "to avoid." * Who theſe *Remonſtrants* referred to are it is needleſs to enquire; but why this *dilemma*, as it is called, ſhould appear formidable to any, or its laſt horn be ſtudiouſly avoided, I know not. What can be more reaſonable than to allow, that GOD's *act of grace* upon a ſinner is an *infuſed ſupernatural habit?* Surely this is language more intelligible, and a work far more worthy of GOD than what

* *Ibid.* p. 225.

what our opponent has advanced. And who would ſcruple to ſay, that "all who are not *converted*, are *therefore* not converted, *becauſe* GOD's Spirit hath not wrought theſe habits in them?" Becauſe GOD does not work upon a ſinner by a ſupernatural act of *grace*, is he therefore *unjuſt* in condemning him for his *ſins?* Is our moral obligation *wholly* founded on grace? Are men not bound to love GOD, and make him their chief end, except they have ſupernatural aids? Have they not underſtandings, wills, moral means (the holy ſcriptures, divine inſtitutions, &c.) and unconſtrained freedom?

"That any ſupernatural habits muſt be *infuſed* "into us in an inſtant, and not *produced by frequent* "*actions*—is that which *my hypotheſis* by no means "will allow. The ideas which he raiſes in us, "though they are raiſed by a phyſical operation, "yet are they moral in their operations: even as a "man's tongue in ſpeaking to perſuade, or to "diſſuade another, performs a phyſical operation, "though the effect of it is only moral."† Here then is an hypotheſis that maintains without bluſhing, the ability of the *natural man*, of the *carnal mind*, not only to *underſtand* but alſo to *receive* the things of the Spirit of GOD; nay moreover, to produce in himſelf a *new nature* by his own actions! Oh rotten, wretched, proud *Pelagianiſm*, wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the good and gracious ways of the Lord?—*The ideas phyſically raiſed are moral in their effects.* This, it ſhould ſeem, is the great advantage of the Arminian hypotheſis. Who can avoid

† *Ibid.*

avoid being prepoſſeſſed in favour of it from a circumſtance ſo important? From the uncommon ſtreſs that is laid on this idea, it might appear natural to infer, that the orthodox opinion is herein miſerably deficient. But impartiality well informed muſt allow that *our* hypotheſis, in this very point, has every advantage of which the other can boaſt. To illuſtrate this matter let the following remarks be conſidered:

§ 24. 1. The doctrine of *infuſed habits* no more *ſuperſedes* the uſe of means, than that of mere *moral ſuaſion*. The former includes the latter, though the latter excludes the former. There is no argument whatever of real weight that an Arminian can urge with men, in order to their converſion or edification, but which a Calviniſt may conſiſtenly uſe. By no legitimate conſequence does it follow that, becauſe GOD acts the part of a gracious Legiſlator and equitable Judge, in his diſpenſations and his word, he therefore cannot by an act of ſovereign grace *enable* the ſinner to *improve* means; eſpecially when we conſider the *abſolute need* there is of ſuch an operation if any be *actually* perſuaded to embrace the great ſalvation. The uſe of perſuaſion ſuppoſes man as rational and accountable; beyond which GOD is not obliged in equity to go. Were *any one* to comply cordially with the divine call, his compliance would be accepted, though he had no infuſed habit. Whence it follows, that when we plead for a *phyſical* influence on the *mind*, it is not merely a pleading for an *opinion* which appears to be countenanced by reaſon,

reaſon, and confirmed by ſcripture, but it is moreover a queſtion concerning *facts*. We ſay, with ſcripture and experience, that all the children of men are actually degenerate. From the very nature of moral means, in connection with moral depravity and guilt, we further conclude, that it is, *in fact*, clearly impoſſible for ſuch means to effect the change agreed to be neceſſary, without a ſeparate ſovereign influence. And yet, if GOD treat with men as rational beings, accountable to him for their talents; if he do not altogether diſſolve the moral ſyſtem of our world, moral means *muſt* be uſed.

2. Though moral ſuaſion (being, like the law, "weak through the fleſh,") does not effect a ſaving change without the Holy Spirit, yet the *diſpoſition* itſelf, being made good by a phyſical change, is *moral* in its *operations*. To judge, deſire, and love ſpiritually; to repent, believe, and obey, are all *moral* operations, while yet *effects* of a *phyſical* change. Is the *act* of any being, whether perfect or imperfect, *leſs moral* becauſe the previous diſpoſition is the work of GOD? We may as well queſtion, Whether the act of hearing is *ours*, becauſe GOD planted the ear; or the act of ſeeing *ours*, becauſe GOD formed the eye; that holy confidence is *ours*, becauſe "the love of GOD ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt" is the previous inſpiring cauſe of that confidence.

3. All *means*, as far as they are operative, are, according to our principles, *moral* in their *effects*. Whatever object is preſented to the underſtanding,

to the will, or any faculty of the mind, it operates *morally* and not *phyſically*, by *perſuaſion* and not *mechaniſm*, though the effect be not contingent as to GOD. A *certainty* in the *effect* is perfectly conſiſtent with the *morality* of the *operation*. To aſcertain the former it is enough to know the *diſpoſition*, its exact degree of goodneſs or pravity. Does a pure ſtream flow from a corrupt fountain? Does a good tree, *continuing* ſuch, bear bad fruit? Does not the infinite goodneſs of GOD render it abſolutely certain that he will do nothing amiſs? Or, is there any probability that infernal ſpirits, confirmed in wickedneſs, will perform benevolent deeds? Is not the probability of any means being properly improved, and good actions performed, exactly in proportion to the *diſpoſition* of the agent? Two perſons take up the ſacred volume, or hear its contents; to the one the divine teſtimony is a ſavour of life, to the other of death; one deems what he reads or hears the higheſt wiſdom, the other unintereſting truth, or perhaps inſipid folly. Suppoſing alſo, with our author, that GOD does as much for the one as the other, by making ſome *equal* impreſſions, how ſhall we be able rationally to account for the difference of the *effect*, but by allowing a proportionable difference of diſpoſition? When a good and gracious effect therefore is intended to be produced, our author's hypotheſis of a *phyſical impreſs on the* BRAIN is needleſs; a ſupernatural agency on the *mind*, whereby it is *made good*, is alone wanted.

If it be ſaid, that the mind being *free* ſtill implies the means *may* be fruſtrated; and how can this conſiſt

conſiſt with the certainty of the effect? It is granted, that a ſtate of probation, without the intervention of preſerving grace, does imply, that *all means* whatever *may* be fruſtrated; but from thence it does not follow, that infuſed grace will not prevent ſinful acts, on the one hand, or will deſtroy freedom on the other. Goodneſs of diſpoſition *continued*, will infallibly produce good acts, but if left in equity, the reverſe. And freedom in its own nature does not conſiſt in an equal indifference to good and evil, elſe the goodneſs of GOD, and the grace of the bleſſed in heaven, would be no *advantage* againſt tranſgreſſion. He who *acts from rational motives* without conſtraint, is free; though there ſhould be a *million to one* that his choice and action ſhould be one way rather than another, owing to the ſtate and diſpoſition of the agent; yea, by parity of reaſon, an *infinite* number to one, ſo as to afford him who fully underſtands the caſe an *abſolute certainty* of the event.

§ 25. But it is again urged: "If ſuch a divine "unfruſtrable operation is neceſſary to the conver- "ſion of a ſinner, then the *word* read or preached "can be no *inſtrument* of their converſion without "this divine unfruſtrable impulſe, becauſe *that* "only acts by moral ſuaſion—only this is not ſo to "be underſtood as to exclude the co-operation of "GOD with his word, or the aſſiſtance of his Holy "Spirit ſetting it home upon our hearts; provided "this be not by way of *phyſical* and not *moral* "operation."* Is this any thing more than a

* *Diſcourſe*, p. 249.

bare aſſertion, that the *inſtrumentality* of the word is of itſelf ſufficient to convert a ſinner by way of moral ſuaſion, with a *ſalvo* apparently orthodox, but in reality without any determinate meaning, that the Spirit *aſſiſts* in *ſetting it home upon our hearts.*

Pelagians and Arminians are not the only perſons who expreſs themſelves in ſimilar language; there are many others who, without any deſign of degrading the glorious work of the ſpirit, indulge a mode of expreſſion not eaſily reconciled with their principles. This being the caſe, I could wiſh to offer ſuch a reply to the objection of Arminians as at the ſame time refutes the miſtakes of thoſe who are Calviniſtic in other points. And this, I think, is done ſatisfactorily in the language of a very reſpectable and judicious writer. He is diſcourſing of the principle of *grace*, concerning which he obſerves, that "it is *infuſed* and not *acquired.* The firſt prin-
"ciple, or ſpring of good actions, may, with equal
"reaſon, be ſuppoſed to be infuſed into us, as Chriſ-
"tians, as it is undoubtedly true, that the prin-
"ciple of reaſoning is infuſed into us as men. None
"ever ſuppoſed that the natural power of reaſoning
"may be acquired; ſo that power, whereby we are
"enabled to put forth ſupernatural acts of grace,
"which we a call a principle of grace, muſt be
"ſuppoſed to be implanted in us; which, were it
"acquired, we could not, properly ſpeaking, be ſaid
"to be born of GOD. From hence I am obliged
"to infer, that the regenerating act, or implanting
"this principle of grace, which is at leaſt in order
"of nature, antecedent to any act of grace put
"forth

" forth by us, is the immediate effect of the power of " God, which none, who ſpeak of regeneration as " a divine work, pretend to deny: and therefore I " cannot but conclude, that it is wrought in us " *without the inſtrumentality of the word*, or *any* of the " ordinary means of grace. My reaſon for it is " this; becauſe it is neceſſary (from the nature of " the thing) to our receiving, improving, or reap- " ing any advantage by the word, that the Spirit " ſhould produce the principle of faith; and to " ſay, that this is done by the word, is, in effect, to " aſſert that the word produces the principle, and " the principle gives efficacy to the word; which " ſeems to me little leſs than arguing in a circle. " The word cannot profit unleſs it be mixed with " faith; and faith cannot be put forth, unleſs it " proceeds from a principle of grace implanted; " therefore this principle of grace is not produced " *by* it. We may as well ſuppoſe that the pre- " ſenting of a beautiful picture before a man that " is blind, can enable him to ſee; or the violent " motion of a withered hand produce ſtrength for " action, as we can ſuppoſe, that preſenting the " word, in an objective way, is the inſtrument " whereby God produces that internal principle, " by which we are enabled to embrace it."*

There ſeem to be but two ways in which it can be ſuppoſed that the Spirit of God co-operates with his word; or, as Dr. WHITBY expreſſes it, " ſets it home upon our hearts." The *influence* muſt be

* See RIDGLEY's Body of Divinity, Vol. ii. p. 21, &c.

on either the *recipient* or the *inſtrument*, qualifying the former to receive, or giving energy to the latter to operate. If *one* of theſe be ſufficient, to ſuppoſe *both* is unneceſſary. As to the ſuppoſition of adding force to the inſtrument by ſome phyſical impulſe, whether providential or ſupernatural, beſide what has been already mentioned, it labours under the great diſadvantage of being inexplicable in point of analogy; ſo that perhaps it is impoſſible to form any *clear ideas* of it by any operation in nature, without involving an abſurdity in its moral application. Muſt we conceive of the word as a projectile, a miſſile weapon, or an inſtrument of power *producing* the moral principle? The idea is abſurd; for then a *moral* mean muſt act *mechanically*, which involves a contradiction. Whereas if we ſuppoſe the phyſical influence to be on the recipient, prediſpoſing the mind to a right improvement of means, the *certainty* of the intended effect is eaſily conceived, in perfect conſiſtency with the *freedom* of the mind, and the *moral effect* of the means.

To this repreſentation it may be objected, that the ſcriptures often ſpeak of the *powerful efficacy* of the word. "Is not my word as fire, and as a *hammer that breaketh* the rocks in pieces?" "Of his own will begat he us *with the word of truth.*" To which we reply in the words of the reſpectable author laſt referred to, that ſuch language of ſcripture "does not ſo much reſpect the *implanting* of the "principle of grace, as it does our being enabled "to *act* from that principle.—*Regeneration* may be "taken, not only for our being *made alive* to God,

"or

" or *created* unto good works, but for our *putting* " *forth living actions*, proceeding from that principle " which is implanted in the ſoul." *

In ſhort, the *exerciſe* of every grace, as faith, fear, hope, love, ſuppoſes a *revealed object*; ſo that the very exiſtence of theſe graces, conſidered as *our acts and duties*, believing, fearing, hoping, or loving, muſt be owing to the word of truth, as a generating cauſe. But, in treating of this branch of theological truth, it is of importance not to confound, as too often is done, theſe two ſorts of cauſation. For, ſeriouſly to maintain the ſentiment here oppoſed, would be of the ſame tendency as the following: That the *real cauſe* why the waters of the red ſea were divided, was Moſes' *hand* ſtretched over the ſea, as God's inſtrument; or, that the *real cauſe* why Lazarus was quickened into life, was this ſentence, " Lazarus, come forth."

It is preſumed, that, from the arguments advanced, and the objections obviated, it now appears evident, there is nothing in the orthodox doctrine of *ſpecial grace* at all inconſiſtent with *divine equity*. — We now proceed to another branch of the ſubject; viz.

§ 26. (IV.) *The* WILL *determined by grace.* What has been already advanced precludes in ſome meaſure the neceſſity of a full inveſtigation of this point; and is rendered, moreover, leſs neceſſary to the inquiſitive reader, by an incomparable treatiſe written on the ſubject, with a profeſſed view to the

* RIDGLEY, *ut ſupra*, p. 22.

book on which I am animadverting; I mean, Preſident EDWARDS's "Inquiry into the modern prevailing notions of that Freedom of Will, which is ſuppoſed to be eſſential to moral agency, virtue and vice, reward and puniſhment, praiſe and blame." The point of view in which we now conſider the queſtion, is, Whether the determination of the will by grace is inconſiſtent with EQUITY. Dr. WHITBY contends, as do all the Arminians, that it is inconſiſtent; but before I proceed to confute his arguments, it is proper he ſhould ſpeak for himſelf.

Thus he ſtates and reaſons: "For the due "ſtating of this queſtion concerning the liberty, or "freedom of the will of man, let it be noted, "That the *ſtate* of man in this world is a ſtate of "*trial* or probation — hence it follows, That the "*liberty* belonging to this queſtion, is only that of "a *lapſed* man in a ſtate of trial, probation, and "temptation: whether he hath a freedom to chooſe "life or death, to anſwer or reject the calls and "invitations of GOD to do, by the aſſiſtance of "the grace afforded in the goſpel to him, what is "ſpiritually good as well as evil, or whether he be "*determined to one*, having only a freedom from "coaction but not from neceſſity. This liberty is "indeed no perfection of human nature; for it "ſuppoſes us imperfect, as being ſubject to fall "by temptation, and when we are advanced to the "ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, or to a fixed "ſtate of happineſs, will, with our other imper-"fections, be done away; but yet it is a freedom "abſolutely requiſite, as we conceive, to render us "capable

" capable of trial or probation, and to render our " actions worthy of praiſe or diſpraiſe, and our " perſons of rewards or puniſhments."

Again, " The freedom of the will in this ſtate " of trial and temptation, cannot conſiſt with a " determination to one—ſeeing this determinating " operation puts him out of a ſtate of trial, and " makes him equal, when this divine impulſe comes " upon him, to the ſtate of angels; ſince he who " muſt certainly and without fail, do what the di- " vine impulſe doth incite him to do, is as much " determined to one, as they are. And this is " further evident from the general determination " of the ſchools, and of all that I have read upon " this ſubject, that the general will to be happy, " and not to be miſerable, though it be voluntary, " is not free; becauſe we cannot chooſe either not " to be happy, or to be miſerable; and on the " ſame account, ſay they, this will is not praiſe- " worthy, or rewardable."

Moreover, " This αὐτεξούσιον, or *free-will* of man, " being neither an *act*, for that is an exerciſe of the " will; nor an *habit*, for that only doth facilitate " and incline to action; but a *faculty of power*; " and the object of that power being in moral " actions, ſomething morally, in ſpiritual actions " ſomething ſpiritually good to be choſen, or ſpi- " ritually evil to be avoided; that which *diſables* " any man from chooſing what is ſpiritually good, " or refuſing what is thus evil, and therefore is " deſtructive to his ſoul and ſpirit, muſt alſo take

" away

" away his *liberty* to chooſe what is ſpiritually good, " and to refuſe what is ſpiritually evil."

Once more, " To ſay here that men thus diſ- " abled may deſerve puniſhment for the evil they " do, though they cannot do otherwiſe, becauſe " they diſobey *willingly* and chooſe to do ſo, is to " make the devils and damned ſpirits farther " puniſhable, becauſe they alſo chooſe to do evil; " and the bleſſed angels rewardable, becauſe they " chooſe to do good, and do it willingly. — To " ſay that men under this unfruſtrable operation " are ſtill *free*, becauſe what they are moved thus " to do they *will* to do, and do it with compla- " cency, is only to ſay, Man herein hath the free- " dom of an elect angel, which is not rewardable; " but not that he hath the freedom of a proficient, " or one in a ſtate of trial and probation. — That " this is the true ſtate of the queſtion cannot be " reaſonably doubted."*

Theſe extracts appear to me to contain the fundamental principles of our author's doctrine on the *freedom of the will*, in the application of which againſt the calviniſtic ſide of the queſtion, he every where inſinuates, that there is ſomething inconſiſtent with divine *juſtice* in the ſentiments he oppoſes, and which we maintain. Let us now examine theſe principles with as much brevity as the nature of the ſubject will admit of.

§ 27. 1. It is gratuitouſly aſſumed, that the liberty belonging to *lapſed* man, is a liberty eſſentially

* *Diſcourſe*, p. 297, 299, 301, 305, 309, 312.

tially *different* from that which belongs to man in a *perfect* ſtate. Whereas the difference between *lapſed* and *perfect* can no more influence the queſtion in diſpute, "Whether the Will be determined by Grace," than man's breach of the divine law can abſolve him from his allegiance to the ſupreme lawgiver and judge. To ſuppoſe that the *fall* or tranſgreſſion of man alters the nature of that liberty which makes him *accountable*, is contrary to all reaſon and analogy; and is not unlike a plea urged to excuſe a man from diſcharging an *old* debt — becauſe he has incurred a *new* one!

2. Since man had not in his beſt eſtate, as before ſhewn,* "a power to do what is ſpiritually good," much leſs has he now in his lapſed ſtate; except we ſuppoſe that his *power* increaſes with his guilt and *wickedneſs*. It is true, man has a *borrowed* power, which never fails him, of chooſing what *appears* to him *beſt*; elſe he muſt either ceaſe to be a voluntary agent, or chooſe evil *as evil*, which is inadmiſſible. There is therefore no controverſy about his power of chooſing life or death, as far as *he judges* (all things being taken into the account) the one or the other to be eligible. But this muſt not be confounded with "a power to do what is ſpiritually good," as if the latter were neceſſary to accountableneſs. For

3. The *real* power of doing well is not, and cannot be eſſential to the *liberty* of *any* accountable being. If, when the intellect repreſents an object as beſt to be choſen, a divine *concurrence* take place, as

* Chap. iv. Sect. i.

as an eſtabliſhed law of providential government, which may be called a *borrowed* or *improper* power in the creature, it is abundantly ſufficient to conſtitute the reſponſibility of the ſubject.

4. The *ſalvo* ſubjoined in the objection, "a freedom to do — *by the aſſiſtance of the grace afforded in the goſpel*," is vague and indeterminate; but probably is intended to convey the ſentiment before expoſed, "an idea raiſed in the brain by the Holy Spirit, and the impreſſion made upon it there;" which requires no other confutation than is due to the ancient jargon of Ariſtotelian philoſophy—myſtic forms, and occult qualities.

5. When our author contends that the will ought not to be *determined to one*, in order to blame-worthineſs or praiſe, in ſuch a manner as to be free from *neceſſity* as well as co-action; he requires not only what is unreaſonable but *impoſſible*. For there is no medium between the will being *determined to one*, when the choice is really good, and the *will determining itſelf*; and that this latter is impoſſible, or an inconceivable abſurdity, Preſident EDWARDS has given the moſt ample proofs, in his unanſwerable performance on the ſubject, to which the reader is referred.

§ 28. Dr. WHITBY contends, That the liberty of man, in the preſent ſtate of trial, implies "a power to do what is ſpiritually good as well as evil;" could any one then, except he had a bad cauſe to ſerve, a tottering hypotheſis to prop, once imagine it conceivable, that *ſuch* a power is one of the

the *imperfections* of human nature, and peculiar to the preſent ſtate? Yet ſuch is the opinion which he holds. An *imperfection*, yet *abſolutely requiſite* to render our actions worthy of praiſe or diſpraiſe! May not this writer be juſtly termed the patron of IMPERFECTIONS? Surely, what renders our actions *praiſe-worthy*, and our perſons capable of *rewards*, muſt be *good*; but are *imperfections* good things?

Again, that *freedom*, in the preſent ſtate, cannot conſiſt with a *determination to one*, he argues from the ſimilarity that would then ſubſiſt between men in this world and the angels in heaven. But men's obligations do not ariſe from what they *are* in a ſtate of probation; the queſtion is what they *ought* to be. And *ought* not the will of GOD to be "done on earth, as it is done in heaven?" The truth is, that men, as far as they are praiſe-worthy, are like the angels; and their *goodneſs* proceeds from the ſame cauſe; they do "what the divine impulſe doth incite them to do." The difference does not conſiſt in the *nature* of their freedom, where they chooſe what is ſpiritually good; but in its degree, or, perhaps more accurately, in that the angels are *always* incited to do what is right, to the utter excluſion of all evil; and men in the preſent ſtate *variouſly*. As far as they are the ſubjects of ſovereign *grace*, they are ſo incited as to time and degrees; but as far as they are dealt with in *equity*, they chooſe what is wrong; for nothing prevents their abuſe of liberty but a gracious divine impulſe.

It

It is objected, That "the general will to be happy, and not to be miſerable, though it be voluntary, is not free," and therefore not praiſe-worthy; from whence it is inferred, that no freedom is praiſe-worthy but what is independent of all neceſſity. Conſequently, ſuch is the deſperate ſtate of the cauſe, he denies that angels are at all rewardable, and the damned ſpirits further puniſhable! As if the *whereneſs* of a moral action conſtituted its *nature!* But is there no *goodneſs* in the ſteady inclination of Angels to holineſs and GOD, or *badneſs* in the fixed averſion of Devils? Nothing praiſe-worthy in the ardent love of the one, or blame-worthy in the conſtant hatred of the other? Theſe, however, are implied parts of the ſyſtem oppoſed, and which are adopted for the ſake of avoiding the conſequence that an action may be at once *free*, *neceſſary*, and *praiſe-worthy*. But the union of theſe being evidently in the bleſſed GOD, in holy Angels, and Jeſus Chriſt, another figment muſt be invented of a freedom *peculiar to a lapſed ſtate!* It muſt be earneſtly contended for, as *abſolutely requiſite*, elſe GOD would be *unjuſt* in requiring compliance with his calls and invitations to duty; and yet muſt be done away as an *imperfection!*

Once more: it is argued, that ſince the requiſite freedom is neither an *act* nor an *habit*, but "*a faculty of power*," a divine determinating operation takes away *liberty* to chooſe, which is inadmiſſible. But, leaving our author in the full enjoyment of his own definition, it is granted by him that an "habit doth *facilitate* and *incline* to action;" if therefore divine grace

grace form the temper and habit of the mind, which inclines to a good action, an event or action may be made *certain*, or *neceſſarily* future, without infringing this "faculty of power." And this is what we plead for, not that grace has for its immediate object the act or power of willing, ſo much as the *perſon* in his diſpoſition and habits. Make the tree good and the fruit will be good; but an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

§ 29. It remains only to ſhew, in a more direct manner, that this *operation of grace which determines the will* is not inconſiſtent with *equity*, which is the only objection, virtually, that Arminians can make in their oppoſition to it. In addition therefore to what has been ſaid in reply to particular arguments and objections, we obſerve:

1. That from the *nature of the will itſelf*, which is the power of the mind by which we chooſe, and its *true liberty*, it appears, the influence of grace in determining the will is not unjuſt, or unworthy of the ſupreme Governor. If the will be the power we have of chooſing the greateſt apparent good, as all muſt allow it is; and if that *apparent* good which is choſen be the *real* good, while the coincidence of *appearance* and *reality* ariſes from the graciouſly *rectified* ſtate of the mind; is there any infringement of the will in its operation when making ſuch a choice, more than if the mind were left to chooſe the *appearance* only of good to the rejection of the reality, through its unrectified temper? Can the *purity* of our liberty and choice be more effectually ſecured

ſecured by the *impurity* of the mind and heart? Can the will and its liberty be *more perfect* by the preſence of an acknowledged *imperfection?* Is the liberty leſs *real* becauſe the object preferred is good, and certainly foreſeen by omniſcience?

2. The futility of the ſyſtem oppoſed, and the equitableneſs of that now defended, may appear from the *nature of that operation* which is in queſtion, in reference to the will; it being a ſovereign act of God rectifying the *moral ſtate* of the creature, which is a conſideration altogether different from an injury offered to the will, which is a *natural* faculty.

3. We appeal to the *nature of equity*, which is violated only when the creature has more than his due of *ſuffering*. But as this operation conſiſts in nothing worſe than rectifying the moral ſtate of the ſubject, what conceivable *injury* is done it? Our ſyſtem does indeed repreſent the ſubject as deſtitute of all *merit*, and independent worthineſs; becauſe none is *really due* to him, whether viewed as a ſinner or a mere creature. Why our author ſhould *aſcribe praiſe to men* for chooſing what is good, and yet *deny praiſe to angels* for making the *ſame* choice, it may well puzzle thoſe heavenly intelligences to underſtand; except it be to favour the monſtrous, extravagant, rebellious doctrine of *human* merit, and to rob God of part at leaſt of that praiſe which is due to his glorious majeſty.

4. We appeal to the *nature of divine ſovereignty*, which has *unlimited* power over the creature for its *welfare*, in its being, diſpoſition, and actions. Yet no one who underſtands the ſubject can heſitate reſpecting

reſpecting the perfectly harmonious agreement of *ſuch* divine ſovereignty and equity. To *confirm* ſaints or angels in purity and happineſs, and make them *neceſſarily* inclined and determined to good, is an act of *ſovereignty*; ſince, I preſume, arrogance itſelf would fail in defending it as their *due* in equity: therefore, to determine and confirm a moral agent in the choice of good is not inconſiſtent with equity.

5. We appeal to the juſt *conſequences* which would flow from the denial of our propoſition. It would tend to reſtrain omnipotent benevolence from rendering men, while in the preſent ſtate, *better* than they are without their *previous* conſent; GOD muſt not preſume to make the work of his hands more amiable, more inclined to virtue, to holineſs, and the fruition of himſelf; he muſt wait for the favourable deciſion of his enemy — "the carnal mind, which is enmity againſt GOD, which is not ſubject to his law, nor indeed can be." — A work muſt be wrought, a change muſt be effected, or man cannot be happy; for "without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord;" but man cannot be conformed to the law of GOD while in his carnal enmity, that is, cannot be holy, or qualified for heaven; if therefore GOD be reſtrained from effecting this qualification, how is it to be done? The truth is, if GOD do it not, it *cannot be done*, nor can any ſoul of our fallen race entertain the ſmalleſt degree of rational hope of eternal happineſs. As we would avoid eternal miſery we muſt be "holy and without blame, pure in heart, and made meet

to be partakers of the future inheritance of the ſaints in light;" none but GOD *can* thus qualify us, and he has promiſed to do it in various ways; but this proud αὐτεξούσιον, this formleſs phantom of *ſelf-ſovereignty*, holds his hand, and charges him with *injuſtice* if he do it!

In brief, the ſentiment I oppoſe robs GOD of what he claims as his right and glory — to ſave us by his *grace*, not by *works*, leſt any man ſhould *boaſt*. It places man on the ground of *ſelf-worthineſs*, which is the ſole prerogative of GOD. It aſcribes to imperfect rebellious man that ſovereignty over future events, and his own happineſs in particular, which is denied to holy angels, and which belongs only to GOD, who "*works in us both to will and to do* what is praiſe-worthy *of his own good pleaſure*." — And finally, it implies that GOD cannot be juſt except man poſſeſs a power *to be* good, and to *do* good *of himſelf* — a power which we have endeavoured to ſhew to be incommunicable to any creature however exalted.

With abſolute *election*, particular *redemption*, *ſpecial grace*, and the *will* determined by grace, ſtands cloſely connected,

§ 30. (V.) *The perſeverance of ſaints*; which Dr. WHITBY ſtrenuouſly oppoſes. We ſhall take the ſtate of the queſtion, on his part, from the author himſelf. "We own, ſays he, that they who are "preſerved to ſalvation, are ſo preſerved by the "power of GOD through faith; and that they "who are thus kept, are kept by Chriſt, he alone "being

" being able to keep them unblameable; but then " we deny that GOD hath abſolutely promiſed to " keep them by his power from making ſhip- " wreck of this faith; or that the juſt man who " lives by faith ſhall never draw back unto per- " dition."* " We own that GOD hath engaged " his faithfulneſs, that all who do not wickedly " depart from him, ſhall never be forced from him " by the power of any adverſaries — but, deny " that GOD hath from eternity decreed, or abſo- " lutely promiſed to preſerve them from falling into " thoſe ſins which he cautions them to avoid, or " to perform himſelf what he requires as their " duty."† " We grant that GOD hath promiſed " perſeverance in the ways of righteouſneſs to the " end, to thoſe who conſtantly and conſcientiouſly " uſe the means by him preſcribed for that end — " but deny that GOD hath abſolutely promiſed to " interpoſe his power infruſtrably to engage all " true believers to uſe theſe means." ‡

On the other hand we acknowledge, not only that ſaints may be guilty of great ſins, but alſo that it is not owing to any ſtrength, ſteadineſs, or immutability of the renewed will or nature in them, that they do not fall away totally and finally; but is to be aſcribed, not only to the power but alſo the *purpoſe*, *faithfulneſs*, and *wiſdom* of GOD.

What we hold therefore, in diſtinction from our opponents, is reducible to theſe two points; *Firſt*, That thoſe who are *ſaints* indeed, pardoned and renewed, ſhall *perſevere* in that ſtate, and be finally

 glorified;

* *Diſcourſe* p. 385, &c. † p. 386. ‡ p. 387, 388.

glorified; and conſequently, that thoſe who do not *die* ſaints, *never were* ſaints. *Secondly*, That in this doctrine there is nothing *inequitable*; there are no objections implied in it that can juſtly militate againſt the accountableneſs of man or the equity of GOD, the declarations of his word, or the rules of his providence.

§ 31. To inveſtigate the truth and evidence of this doctrine in the numerous *paſſages of holy writ* which are uſually introduced into this controverſy, would lead us to a prolixity unſuitable to the nature of our plan. We conceive that not a *ſingle text* fairly interpreted, according to its real deſign, is repugnant to this doctrine; but as our author has been at the trouble of reducing them into certain general heads, thoſe which are moſt plauſible and important in the view of the inquiſitive mind will be noticed, in the way of objections.

In order to ſimplify the ſubject as much as poſſible, the firſt thing propoſed may be thus expreſſed; the doctrine which maintains that the perſons who *are eventually ſaved*, *might have been eventually loſt*, is unworthy of GOD, according to the diſcoveries he has made on the ſubject, both of himſelf and his conduct: And that the converſe of this propoſition is equally ſo, namely, that ſome of thoſe who are *eventually loſt* were once *ſaints*. The arguments which conclude in the one caſe, are concluſive in the other; and therefore we may conſider them as connected. Yet that the attention of the reader may not be embarraſſed by the complexity

plexity of the ſubject, let this point firſt be kept principally in view, It is *unworthy of God* to ſuppoſe that *any who are eventually ſaved might have been eventually loſt*. And in proof of the aſſertion we appeal,

1. To what we are taught of the divine *purpoſe*. It is acknowledged by Dr. WHITBY himſelf, "that they who are kept, are kept by the power of GOD;" it muſt be alſo acknowledged, that for any to be ſo kept is a great privilege and *bleſſing*, eſpecially to be preſerved in ſafety until they are lodged in eternal bleſſedneſs. This then is a real good, of which GOD is confeſſedly the author and finiſher. Now it is *unworthy* of GOD to ſuppoſe that he did not *purpoſe* all the good he performs; therefore he purpoſed the ſalvation and perſeverance of all who are eventually ſaved. Conſequently, thoſe who are ſaved could not have been loſt; for *who hath reſiſted his will* of purpoſe? Surely, it will not be queſtioned by any who have the ſmalleſt degree of real knowledge of the true character of GOD, that known unto him are all *his works* from the beginning of the world, and that all *he effects* is according to the *counſel* of his own will. Theſe two things, therefore, which are ſo evidently joined, GOD's *work* in time and his eternal *purpoſe*, muſt be ſeparated, which is altogether unworthy of the divine character, or elſe we muſt conclude, That thoſe who are or ſhall be actually ſaved, could not have been loſt.

When therefore it can be proved, that eventual ſalvation originated in *ourſelves*, and originated in

ſuch a manner as to make us *independent* on the work of GOD in our preſervation; or when it can be proved, that GOD worketh ſome things, even the bringing of many ſons to glory by the captain of their ſalvation, which he did not *purpoſe* to do after the counſel of his will; then may it be alſo proved, but not before, that ſome who are eventually ſaved *might* have been loſt. Again we appeal

2. To the divine *faithfulneſs*. To ſuppoſe that any who are eventually ſaved might have been loſt, is an impeachment of the faithfulneſs of GOD to his own *purpoſe and plan* reſpecting the event. That GOD has a purpoſe and plan reſpecting ſuch event is manifeſt, except we ſay, that the important event will take place either *without* or *contrary* to any purpoſe or plan; which is to build the glory, everlaſting glory of millions on the phantom *contingence*, or the equally phantaſtic notion of *ſinful ſelf-ſovereignty!* But if there is a purpoſed plan reſpecting the event, GOD's *faithfulneſs* to his own deſigns, and its inviolable preſervation, require, that thoſe who are finally ſaved *could not* have been loſt.

We draw the ſame concluſion from the argument of GOD's faithfulneſs to the *Saviour*. "Aſk of me, ſaith GOD to the Meſſiah, and I ſhall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion."* "And I know, ſays the Meſſiah, that thou heareſt me always."† Whatever, therefore, Chriſt aſks of the Father, he is engaged in faithfulneſs to grant.

* Pſalm ii. 8. † John xi. 42.

grant. And this is what he aſks with peculiar emphaſis, " Holy Father, *keep* through thine own own name thoſe whom thou haſt given me, that they may be one as we are. — I pray, that thou ſhouldeſt *keep* them from the evil. *Sanctify* them through thy truth. Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word. Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be *with* me where I am; that they may behold my glory." * Here the Father *engages* to give the ſon what he aſks, and indeed the mediatorial office implies ſuch an engagement; for what kind of Mediator would he be whoſe petitions would be rejected, and how unworthy of God ſuch an appointment; here alſo we obſerve the Mediator emphatically aſking that *all* who ſhould believe on him might be *kept* and *glorified*. If therefore it can be ſaid of any perſon that he is at any time a *believer* or a *ſaint*, the divine faithfulneſs to Chriſt, as Mediator and interceding prieſt, requires that he ſhould behold in heaven the glory of Chriſt, and be eternally with him. And of ſuch we muſt ſay, from the premiſes, that he *could not* have been loſt but in violation of the divine faithfulneſs. — We appeal, finally,

§ 32. 3. To the divine *wiſdom*. This conſideration will be principally directed in favour of the other part of the argument, That thoſe who do *not die* ſaints *never were* ſaints. For it might be urged, that, admitting the divine purpoſe and

* John xvii. *paſſim*.

faithfulneſs to bring to glory thoſe who are eventually ſaved, *others* who are not ſo ſaved might be the ſubjects of grace for a time; ſuch grace as would have *ſaved* them, had they not drawn back unto perdition. In reply, we grant, that this hypotheſis, as not militating againſt the certain ſalvation of thoſe who are eventually ſaved, or the purpoſe and faithfulneſs of GOD reſpecting them, is not *ſo degrading* to the divine character as the other; but yet we regard it as unworthy of GOD in many reſpects, and think it is virtually anſwered in our laſt argument drawn from the Mediator's prayer for *all believers*; and particularly we conſider it as unworthy of the divine *wiſdom* on ſeveral accounts.

1. Since every believer is, from an enemy, reconciled to GOD not only by the death of his Son, but alſo by the gift of his Spirit; regenerated, juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified in the name of the Lord Jeſus and by the Spirit of our GOD; the object of a peculiar love and compaſſion, the ſubject of a peculiar power; ſince he is forgiven, all paſt ſins blotted out, united to the Saviour and made the temple of the Holy Ghoſt; repreſented in heaven by his high prieſt, and intereſted in his interceſſion; it muſt be allowed that here is a *very diſtinguiſhing favour* ſhewn him. He who at firſt commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs hath ſhined into his heart, to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; hath raiſed him from the grave of a natural ſtate, and brought him out of darkneſs into his marvellous light. He hath quickened him *together*

ther with Chriſt, as the effect of the great love wherewith he was loved when dead in ſin; he with *all ſaints* beholds in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, and is changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, as by the ſpirit of the Lord. Theſe are ſome of the bleſſings actually conferred on *every ſaint*, which, it muſt be acknowledged, are miracles of mercy, quite above the courſe of nature and common providence. Now we argue, that it appears repugnant to all the views we have of wiſdom, that any ſhould be in theſe wonderful particulars the ſubjects of *ſovereign grace*, and after all be left to periſh.

2. We argue from the grand eſſential diſtinction which ever muſt be maintained between *moral means* and a *ſovereign operation*. Were all that the ſcriptures relate, as done for ſaints, nothing more than the *former*, the caſe would be very different; and the concluſion of *Arminians*, and our modern *Rationaliſts* in general who agree with them in this point, would be admiſſible. We admit that God does great things for thoſe who are finally loſt, in the way of *moral means*; he *proclaims* to them his adorable perfections, and *exhibits* to them his covenant mercy, his incarnate Son, whoſe mediatorial ſufficiency is a ſource of univerſal encouragement, and in him life eternal. And this is peculiarly the caſe with thoſe who are the ſubjects of covenant ſeals and their attendant privileges, who yet may fall ſhort of eventual ſalvation. But were we to admit that *means* are all, to the excluſion of ſovereign *operation*, no fleſh could be ſaved.

The

The *neceſſity* of this operation has been before ſhewn; let it ſuffice to add, that the favours now referred to, and with which every believer is endowed, are not any thing ſhort of *ſovereign operations* as contradiſtinguiſhed from the *means* properly ſo called. And from hence we argue, that it appears incongruous to the characters of wiſdom to ſeparate theſe from final ſalvation. Means appear to be the *only* inſtruments of moral government, as they are fully adequate to that end; gracious operations therefore are not *neceſſary* for any degree of condemnation which might diſplay the honours of juſtice, ſeeing the formal ground of all puniſhment, as of all ſin and accountableneſs, is not *ſovereign operation* but *ſuitable means* abuſed. Now if neither final ſalvation, nor yet the diſplay of juſtice in their condemnation, be an end attained by theſe miracles of mercy, muſt not the ſuppoſition of a *ſaint's* being *eternally loſt* be a bold impeachment of the *divine wiſdom?*

§ 33. From theſe conſiderations we may, I think, fairly conclude, that GOD *hateth putting away* his ſaints, will *perfect* that which concerns them, will *never leave* nor forſake them, nor the work of his own ſovereign grace in them, that he who hath *begun* this good work will *carry it on* to perfection; guiding them by his counſel, he will receive them to glory, and, girding them with ſtrength, will make both their way and their end perfect. That the ſheep, who know his voice, and ſhare his pardoning and purifying favour, ſhall

never

never periſh; and having drank of the living water, ſhall never thirſt. If they fall they ſhall ariſe; and ſhould the violent blaſt of temptation injure the fruit, leaves and branches, the final evil ſhall not happen to the juſt, nor ſhall his *root* be moved.* Though in *themſelves* there is every cauſe of fear, and ground for caution; yet, in *God* there is abundant cauſe of ſafety, and ſalvation infallibly ſecured. "I will put my fear in their hearts, ſaith GOD, that they ſhall not depart from me."† The tendency of their evil hearts is to go aſtray, but my fear ſhall prevent their apoſtacy. Having loved his own, he loves them to the end. Chriſt hath united them to himſelf by his Spirit, irreſpectively of any worth in them, ſhall he therefore diſcontinue that union and influence becauſe they do not render themſelves worthy in a ſubſequent period? If the enmity of their hearts, and the impurity of their lives, were no ſufficient cauſe why he ſhould *withhold* his love, ſhall their after imperfections determine him to *withdraw* his love?

§ 34. But a laboured vindication of perſeverance, from a conſideration of the numerous topics of argument with which the cauſe might be defended, is not the point now deſigned, ſo much as its defence againſt one radical objection urged by its oppoſers, viz. That ſuch would make the *government of God inequitable.* This is the *tendency* of Dr. WHITBY'S

* Prov. xii. 3, 21. † Jer. xvii. 7, 8.

WHITBY's reaſoning and remarks. He particularly urges, "It is *abſurd* to pray or intercede for "that [*perſeverance*] which GOD hath abſolutely "decreed — nor can it *reaſonably* be ſuppoſed that "an all-wiſe GOD ſhould go about to juſtify the "equity of his ways *only by ſuppoſing things im-* "*poſſible* by virtue of his own decree and promiſe. "—To believe the doctrine of perſeverance is to "make GOD *ſeriouſly to threaten* men for ſuch a "ſin [*apoſtacy*] of which they are *not capable*, and "of which they are *obliged to believe* they are not "capable. — It ſeems *incongruous* to imagine that "GOD ſhould make an *abſolute promiſe*, that true "believers ſhould perſevere to the end, and be "unfruſtrably ſaved, and yet *ſuſpend* their happi- "neſs and reward on this condition, that they do "perſevere unto the end." †

Many other paſſages to the ſame purpoſe occur in our author's Diſcourſe, but as they all terminate in one root, That it is *incongruous, and unworthy of God as a juſt Governor, to enſure, unfruſtrably, the perſeverance of ſaints*, and as our animadverſions on his work have conſiderably ſwelled this Eſſay, it would be ſuperfluous and unpleaſant to multiply quotations. This I believe is all that polemic fairneſs requires. We proceed therefore to examine this radical principle in the following remarks:

1. If there be a moral ſyſtem, there muſt be *commands*, virtual at leaſt, and conſequent obligations. And as we are *dependent* upon GOD for all we

† *Diſcourſe*, p. 382, 393, 398, 419.

we *are*, *have*, and *do*, it muſt be reaſonable to pray for divine aids, and to uſe all moral means of perfection. This, I preſume, will be readily admitted by all whoſe underſtandings are acceſſible by arguments, and whoſe hearts are not the receptacles for the dregs of infidelity.

2. A moral ſyſtem ſuppoſes alſo, that the ſubject of it, while in a ſtate of probation, is expoſed to *danger*, the danger of ſinning, and conſequently of ſuffering, the latter being the natural effect of the former. — Hence it follows,

3. That no man, while in this probationary ſtate, ſhould conſider himſelf ſo ſecure as to be above all danger; but ſhould watch againſt high-mindedneſs, cultivate holy fear, and in this temper paſs the time of his ſojourning on earth, perfecting holineſs, and working out, by divine aſſiſtance, his own ſalvation by oppoſing all ſin. From hence muſt appear the reaſonableneſs, congruity, and beauty of ſuch inſpired addreſſes as have a tendency to promote this frame of mind, and with which the ſacred records abound. Moreover,

4. There are, it muſt be allowed, and our author does not deny, certain abſolute promiſes, *on the part of God*, that he will give grace and glory, never leave nor forſake us, and keep us by his mighty power through faith unto ſalvation. — Thus far we agree, and here is the place where we are obliged to part. But,

5. If the perſeverance of any be *final*, and they *eventually* ſaved, what impropriety is there in ſaying, that they are *preſerved thus by their God unfruſtrably?*

trably? Whatever of happineſs, of goodneſs, of real entity, comes to paſs, is either by *chance*, blind unmeaning chance, or by a *ſettled plan*; to avow the former, is unworthy of the chriſtian name, nay abhorrent from unſophiſticated reaſon; to admit the latter, is the ſame as to acknowledge, that the ſaints *perſevere* in conſequence and in virtue of a *ſettled plan*, and therefore *unfruſtrably*, which is what we contend for. However,

§ 35. Let us view the ſubject a little more cloſely. If there were any real *incongruity* between the abſolute *certainty* of an event, and that event being repreſented as depending on a *condition*, which is the main objection urged, the whole ſyſtem of Providence reſpecting man would be implicated in the charge. It is the duty of men, for inſtance, to *pray* for their daily bread, fruitful ſeaſons, the peace of the world, the ſpread of the goſpel, and a thouſand other things; but who will venture to aſſert that theſe events are not included in the plan of providence to a *certainty?*

If it be ſaid, This plan *might* have been *otherwiſe* if the conditions had been differently performed, it will avail nothing to the objector; for to make the *event* different from what it is, only implies, either, that the *plan* of providence would have been another, diverſe from what it really *is*, or, that it proceeds *without any* plan. Not the latter, ſurely; and if the former, what is gained by it? Nothing, in favour of Arminianiſm.

If

If there be no incongruity, nothing unworthy of the juſt Governor of the univerſe, in commanding us to pray and act in a conditional manner as to *providential* concerns, which are the reſult of a fixed plan; no good reaſon can be ſhewn why it ſhould be incongruous to extend the command to *gracious* concerns, and the affairs of our ſalvation, though the reſult of a plan equally fixed and unfruſtrable. If I pray for the converſion of a ſinner, or the final ſalvation of a ſaint, *why* ſhould this involve the conſequence that there is no certainty or fixed plan reſpecting the event? In order to conſtitute my prayers, endeavours, and the uſe of all preſcribed means, *rational*, muſt God act *without* a plan, or without ſettling the *reſult?*

The fact is, man, as the ſubject of moral government, *muſt* be addreſſed and dealt with *conditionally*. His rational powers, his deliberative freedom, his being ſubject to law and ſanctions, and amenable to his Judge, require it. A being that obeys or diſobeys by *natural* neceſſity is, in that reſpect, no *moral* agent; being *impelled* without deliberative *choice*. To propoſe a *condition* to ſuch would be indeed incongruous, for there is no room to deliberate on the claims of the object preſented. But the *hypothetical* neceſſity, or *certainty* of the event, which we hold, admits no leſs of deliberation and conditional propoſals than the oppoſed hypotheſis, which rejects the divine purpoſes of election and unfruſtrable perſeverance.

In reality, our *knowledge* of the *event* is not the *rule* of our obligation. Our author ſuppoſes, that if the event, that is to ſay perſeverance, were *known*

or

or *believed* to be unfruſtrable, this would have a real tendency to relax the perſon's efforts. But on what principle of religion or morals are we authoriſed to form this concluſion? The miſtake is, indeed, but too common; ſome have even avowed, that if they *knew* any individual to be a *non-elect*, they would neither pray for him, nor uſe any means for his converſion. Such muſt overlook the very eſſential eternal difference there is between GOD's *decretive* plan and his *rectoral* will.

Our author's hypotheſis muſt, of courſe, refer the important event, perſeverance, to the will of man as the *proper cauſe*, the prime diſcriminating efficient; and conſequently, there is no evidence in the nature of things, if our reaſoning (§ 26—29.) on the will being determined by grace be valid, that one ſaint will ever perſevere, or that God can have, without firſt obtaining leave of man's free will, or ſelf-determining power, even ſo much as one ſaint to inherit glory. If any perſevere, it muſt not be, it ſhould ſeem, by *unfruſtrable grace*, but by the excluſive efficacy of fruſtrable human will.

There are ſome terms in this part of the objection which are not properly applied: particularly where a ſaint is repreſented on our principles, as *not capable of apoſtacy*, and obliged to *believe* he is not. Whereas we maintain that the moſt eminent ſaint is both *capable* and even *certain* of falling, if not prevented by ſovereign grace; and therefore is obliged to *believe* ſo. If he is not capable of apoſtacy, if that evil one toucheth him not, it is becauſe the everlaſting

laſting arms are underneath, and his ſeed remaineth in him, through ſovereign interpoſition. The queſtion is not whether he is under the ſame *laws* with others, liable to the ſame *dangers*, or in *himſelf* capable of falling; but whether the acknowledged event, actual perſeverance unto ſalvation, does not imply ſuch a divine arrangement, or fixed purpoſe, as renders the union between grace and glory unfruſtrably certain. We maintain, indeed, that he who loves GOD *truly*, ſhall *continue* to do ſo *eternally*; and yet, *if* a true lover of GOD were permitted to fall ſo far as to ceaſe to love him truly, it is manifeſt he can draw no inference of encouragement while in that ſtate.

Beſides, we are agreed as to the *conſequence* of apoſtacy, that thoſe who are the ſubjects of it cannot inherit the kingdom of GOD. But the difference conſiſts in the ſuppoſed antecedent ſtate of thoſe who apoſtatize totally and finally from the profeſſion of the truth. While Arminians hold that grace is *extinguiſhed* in them, we maintain they never had received the truth in the love of it; in other words, that the nature of genuine holineſs never exiſted in them, for reaſons before adduced. (§ 30, &c.) Therefore, the perſuaſion we have of our ſafety, can operate no further againſt holy fear and watchfulneſs, and the practice of piety, than the contrary perſuaſion. For obſervable remiſſneſs in the chriſtian's life, would argue againſt the *reality* of grace, on our ſyſtem, as well as againſt *actual poſſeſſion*, on the other. And the remedy in both caſes muſt be the ſame—penitential humilia-

tion on account of defects, and application to the throne of grace for needful ſupplies.

§ 36. Thus we have attempted a fair and full inveſtigation of the queſtion, Whether the Calviniſtic explanation of the points in diſpute be inconſiſtent with divine equity; and to prove, that neither abſolute *Election*, particular *Redemption*, our doctrine of diſtinguiſhing and *efficacious grace*, the *Will* determined by grace, nor the *Perſeverance* of ſaints, imply the leaſt reflection on this adorable attribute. How far the reaſoning in the preceding pages is concluſive, let the impartial, and competent reader determine. If the validity of it be admitted, it muſt alſo be acknowledged that the cauſe of Arminianiſm is proportionably weakened.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Whether Sovereignty, in the Calviniſtic ſenſe of the term, be a divine Attribute.

§ 1 *Introduction. The ſubject ſtated, and its importance.* § 2. *That there is in Deity an attribute anſwerable to our definition of ſovereignty argued from,* 1. *The ſelf-exiſtence and independence of* GOD. § 3. 2. *His all-ſufficience and abſolute liberty.* § 4. 3. *From the eſſential imperfection of all creatures; and eſpecially,* § 5. *The precarioufneſs of the creatures' liberty.* § 6. 4. *The wiſdom of* GOD. § 7. 5. *The chief end of all creation.* § 8.—12. *Corollaries.*

§ 1. THE definition of the *word* "ſovereignty," aſcertaining the ſenſe in which I underſtand it, and which the calviniſtic ſyſtem requires, has been given before, when the principal terms which occur in this work were profeſſedly explained*. What we now propoſe is to *prove*, That GOD is actually poſſeſſed of an *abſolute right to will and to do whatever is not inconſiſtent with his own eſſence, intellect, and fixed purpoſe.*

Sovereignty cannot extend ſo far as to counteract a divine immanent *purpoſe actually formed*; for this would imply that he had purpoſed imperfectly, without wiſdom, capriciouſly, or without a plan.

Let it be obſerved, however, that by *purpoſe* we intend ſomething ſuperior to the preſent *ſettled laws of nature*, which, *poſſibly*, may be ſuſpended, controled, counteracted, or even annihilated, without neceſſarily impeaching the divine ſovereignty. For it muſt be allowed that all this was, antecedently conſidered, an object of ſovereignty; and may, for any thing that can be advanced, *a priori*, be a part of the *actual* purpoſe.

Though our opponents permit themſelves to ſpeak ſometimes very ſlightingly, I may ſay with great raſhneſs, of *decrees* and *purpoſes*, in the commonly received Calviniſtic ſenſe of the terms; yet I do not recollect that any author ſeriouſly objects to a *right* in GOD to form, or even to the actual exiſtence of *ſome* decrees. Nor is it probable that any one will object to the *irreverſibility* of thoſe which are admitted to exiſt. We are therefore agreed, that what is thus irreverſibly propoſed, be it what it may, is incapable of incroachment by any divine *right*, however *abſolute* in other reſpects.

Again, it cannot be ſuppoſed that either ſide will queſtion this propoſition, That nothing can be the object of divine *right* but what is repreſented to the divine *intellect* as *poſſible*. That, for inſtance, the divine intellect ſhould repreſent a ſelf-exiſtent or independent creature, is impoſſible; for it would imply two ſupremes, created and uncreated, which is a direct encroachment on the divine eſſence, and therefore infinitely abſurd.

Moreover, it is allowed, that nothing inconſiſtent with the divine *eſſence* can be a matter of divine *right*,

right, as that would involve the groſſeſt contradiction. And, for the ſame reaſon, whatever is inconſiſtent with any *eſſential attribute* of deity, cannot be an object of divine right. For what belongs to the divine *eſſence* muſt belong to *eſſential* perfections, whether natural or moral.

Once more, it muſt be acknowledged that whatever is inconſiſtent with *any eſſential perfection* of deity is *inequitable*, ſince by the term "*equity*," we underſtand "a giving unto all their *due*;" conſequently, a right to what is inconſiſtent with equity, is a right to encroach on the *rights* of GOD! a right to violate infinite *rectitude!* a right to withhold from GOD his *eſſential due!* abſurdities which require no comment.—Theſe things duly conſidered, our propoſition firſt mentioned, and which was propoſed for demonſtration, may be rendered a little ſhorter, and leſs complicated, thus: *God has an abſolute right to will and to do whatever is not inconſiſtent with equity*; and as there is no ground of diſpute between the advocates of the oppoſite ſyſtems reſpecting any object of ſovereignty except what relates to accountable moral agents, in order, therefore, to ſimplify the propoſition ſtill more, we may add; *that equity which gives to all accountable moral agents their* DUE.

The importance of this principle in Theology, and eſpecially in the examination of Arminianiſm, muſt be evident to all who have attended to the ſubject. If God were not *eſſentially ſovereign*, in the ſenſe now explained, it would be a difficulty inſuperable to defend the cauſe for which we plead; and, to ſpeak my mind

freely, there would be in my view no ſyſtem of morality or of religion worth contending for. On the contrary, the avowal of GOD's *abſolute right*, as now ſtated, muſt needs affect the latitudinarian cauſe very eſſentially.

This being the caſe, let me ſolicit the reader's cloſeſt and moſt candid attention. But before we proceed to eſtabliſh our poſition, it may be proper, ſtill more explicitly, to caution him againſt the ſuppoſition that Arminians reject *every notion* of divine ſovereignty; what we therefore intend is, that there is in Deity an eſſential attribute anſwerable to the definition, and which Dr. WHITBY in all his *Diſcourſes* on the conteſted points virtually denies.

§ 2. That Sovereignty is, in our ſenſe of the word, a perfection eſſential to Deity, appears from this one general remark, That *dominion*, or *rightful power* is a real *excellence*, according to the degree in which it prevails in every rational being, and therefore belongs to GOD in an infinite degree, ſeeing he is confeſſedly the ſource of all excellence; nor does there appear any poſſible ground of objection againſt its being extended, in its operations, to the moſt abſolute degree. Let us however be a little more particular:

1. The *ſelf-exiſtence* and *independence* of GOD neceſſarily imply that he is above control, with reſpect to his creatures, as to *moral* as well as *natural* power; poſſeſſed not only of *unfruſtrable phyſical ſtrength*, but alſo of *authoritative right*. For who in

in earth or heaven has a right to ſay, in the language of control, "What doeſt thou?" Here obſerve,

(1.) His ſelf-exiſtence is not *affected* by giving *exiſtence* to creatures, the production of his own will. It cannot be ſuppoſed that he reſigned to others any thing that was previouſly and eſſentially his. Conſequently, as ſelf-exiſtence implies an *abſolute right* in GOD to will and do whatever is not inconſiſtent with *equity*, as it reſpects *himſelf*; ſo GOD continues, notwithſtanding the exiſtence of creatures, to poſſeſs that abſolute right, as it reſpects *them*; that is, while they have their *due*.

(2.) Self-exiſtence is not *affected* by the non-exiſtence, or *annihilation*, of creatures. It cannot be conceived that the dependent exiſtence of creatures implies, from the mere fact of their exiſting, a *claim* upon GOD for the *continuance* of it. He, therefore, has an abſolute right, in equity, to recall when he pleaſes the being he has given.

(3.) Self-exiſtence implies an abſolute right to preſcribe the *mode* and *condition* of dependent exiſtence, while not inconſiſtent with equity. Hence the amazing *variety* of creatures! Hence the *degrees* in the ſcale of being and of excellence! Nor can there be any ground of remonſtrance for any one, in all this aſtoniſhing aſſemblage of beings, however diſhonourable or mean it may be in compariſon of others, why its *mode* or *condition* of exiſtence ſhould be different from what it is. And while theſe creatures, in whatever part of the univerſe they exiſt, have any modification whatſoever, including

the greateſt degrees of pleaſure and pain, in equity, this abſolute right is not *affected* thereby, any more than ſelf-exiſtence.

§ 3. 2. The *all-ſufficience* of GOD, and his abſolute *liberty*, or freedom to chooſe out of all poſſibles, imply the poſſeſſion of that abſolute right for which we contend. Our opponents will find no reluctance in allowing that GOD ever poſſeſſed an all-ſufficience adequate to an endleſs variety of plans; and that he was at abſolute liberty to adopt which he pleaſed in equity. But they ſeem not to be aware that the very principle for which they contend, the high prerogative of FREE WILL, deſtroys their ſyſtem; that is, that the FREE WILL, the *abſolute liberty* which is eſſential to GOD, requires, and neceſſarily implies the *abſolute control* of *man's* liberty. While they contend in favour of human *free-will* to the excluſion of *divine decrees* reſpecting that will, they muſt neceſſarily raiſe the former above the latter, and ſo make the liberty of GOD inferior to that of man. For there cannot be *two ſupreme* liberties, any more than two ſelf-ſufficiencies; the one muſt needs be ſubordinate to, and controled by the other. If the freedom of GOD be not ſupreme and abſolute, then is he not all-ſufficient; if it be, then is man's liberty limited, reſtrained, and directed thereby. And if our liberty be ſubject to control, then the whole of our condition, modifications, and future ſtate. Therefore the all-ſufficience of GOD, as an adequate object of infinite liberty, and liberty itſelf which is *power*, and therefore in GOD to an infinite degree, imply

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an abſolute right in GOD to will and act whatever is not inconſiſtent with equity; and conſequently to influence and control the moſt uncontrolable thing in man, his freedom. *God's* or *man's* liberty *muſt* reign ſupreme.

§ 4. 3. We next appeal, in proof of divine Sovereignty, to the *eſſential imperfection of all creatures.* As there can be, it is ſelf-evident, but one abſolutely perfect being, the ſelf-exiſtent and all-ſufficient JEHOVAH, it is equally evident, that all others are eſſentially imperfect. But this eſſential imperfection implies, that eſſential perfection ſhould have an abſolute right to diſpoſe of it in any poſſible way not inconſiſtent with equity; even in all thoſe reſpects wherein its imperfection conſiſts. As, therefore, every creature, compared with GOD, is imperfect as to being, properties, volitions, actions, &c. it muſt be eſſential to GOD to poſſeſs and exert the Sovereignty of which we ſpeak.

§ 5. Among the imperfections eſſential to creatures, we muſt reckon the *precarioufneſs* of their *liberty*; their defectibility, and uncertainty of preſervation entering into the very eſſence of their freedom. Nothing is more characteriſtic of the awful difference between the Creator and his accountable creatures than that of indefectibility, abſolute certainty, and infalibillity, in him, and in them the reverſe. But this precarioufneſs muſt imply a ſovereign reſerve, a controling power, an abſolute right to influence, direct, preſerve; to over-rule, and

and rectify the miſtakes of defectible freedom. If not, God would beſtow a power over which he had no right, and the abuſes of which he could not rectify. In ſhort, to deny to God ſuch a ſovereignty as we ſpeak of, is the ſame as to allow him ſkill to make a curious machine, the very nature of which implies a liability to get out of repair, but the defects of which are irremediable. It is to allow him ſkill to make man upright, but not to viſit him with grace and mercy from foreſight and purpoſe.—This being the creature's imperfection, and the Creator's right, there is no aſſignable reaſon why it ſhould not extend to every thing not inconſiſtent with Equity, according to our definition of it.

§ 6. 4. Our definition of Sovereignty is implied in the notion eſſential to *divine wiſdom*. Wiſdom implies foreſight and proviſion; but excludes all chance, and ſettles every thing that is a proper object of it. This clearly ſuppoſes an abſolute right to exclude all contingence, and to will and do whatever is not inequitable. Surely wiſdom belongeth unto God, and known unto him are all his works of nature and grace, in every degree and to the lateſt period. To effect *all good*, and to prevent *much* evil, are ſovereign acts, not one of which is unjuſt; but we dare not, we cannot ſay, without violating *juſtice*, that *moral evil* is an object of ſovereign *cauſation*, or indeed of ſovereignty, properly ſpeaking, in any ſenſe. Holy *equity* gives *occaſion* to moral evil to ſhew itſelf; but

but ſovereign *wiſdom* prevents the univerſal ſpread, and its horrible effects, to the degree it ſees proper.

§ 7. 5. The *chief end* of all *created exiſtence* implies that Sovereignty, in our ſenſe of it, is eſſential to GOD. That GOD "made all things for himſelf," that is, to repreſent his own excellence, is not only the language of ſcripture, but alſo the verdict of impartial reaſon.* But if ſo, who ſees not that this implies divine Sovereignty? For is it conceivable that GOD ſhould form all things, in order, chiefly, to diſplay his own adorable excellence, and yet not poſſeſs a ſovereignty over them? After all the evidence which has been produced, and the reference made to Preſident EDWARDS's maſterly performance on the ſubject of this laſt argument, I hope it will be needleſs to enlarge, and truſt it may be ſaid without arrogance, that the original propoſition is fairly demonſtrated; *viz.* "That GOD has an abſolute right to will and to do whatever is not inconſiſtent with equity; that equity which gives to all accountable moral agents their DUE." Nor am I aware of any objections that may be urged with any plauſibility againſt theſe arguments.—It remains therefore to notice the CONSEQUENCES which flow from the proof given.

§ 8. 1. *Coroll.* That GOD had an *abſolute right* to

* See EDWARDS's Diſſertation, concerning the end for which GOD created the world, *paſſim*; and Sect. V. of this work.

to *predeſtinate* whom he pleaſed of his rational creatures to eternal glory. It has been proved before,* that the decree of election, or merciful predeſtination, is not inconſiſtent with equity; and in the foregoing paſſages it has been proved that GOD has, eſſentially, an abſolute right to will and to do whatever is not inequitable; whence the corollary follows; that he has a right to predeſtinate to eternal glory whom he will.

§ 9. 2. *Coroll.* That GOD had an *abſolute right* to *redeem* ſome of the human race with a *decretive ſpeciality*. It has been proved before,† that to extend redemption decretively to ſome more than to others is perfectly conſiſtent with equity; and it has been now proved, that GOD's right extends to every ſuch object; whence the conſequence is inevitable, that particular redemption, in the ſenſe before explained, is an object worthy of God as a ſovereign.

§ 10. 3. *Coroll.* That GOD has an *abſolute right* to confer *ſpecial grace* upon, and infuſe gracious habits into whom he pleaſes. That to do this, is conſiſtent with equity, has been ſhewn before;‡ and we have been *now* proving that GOD's right is *abſolute* as to every thing which is not inequitable; from whence it follows, that his right includes the conferring of *ſpecial* grace.

§ 11.

* Sect. II. § 9. † Ibid. § 10, &c. ‡ Ibid. § 21, &c.

§ 11. 4. *Coroll.* That GOD has an *abſolute right to determine the will* by his gracious influence. To do this, we have ſhewn before, is not inequitable;* and *now* it has been demonſtrated, that GOD's right extends to every ſuch object; conſequently, there lies no ground of complaint againſt his determination of the human will by gracious influence on the mind.

§ 12. 5. *Coroll.* That GOD has an *abſolute right* to cauſe, effectually, all thoſe who are *ſaints* to *perſevere* in a ſtate of grace unto eternal ſalvation. We muſt obſerve, as before, that the perſeverance of ſaints has been proved to be not inconſiſtent with any principle of equity;† and GOD's right includes every ſuch object, as now proved; therefore the truth of the Corollary cannot be impeached.

SECT.

* Ibid. § 26, &c. † Ibid. § 30, &c.

SECT. IV.

Whether the certainty, or hypothetical neceſſity of future events, be conſiſtent with that freedom which is eſſential to moral agency.

§ 1. *Introduction. The ſubject not exhauſted.* § 2. *General Remarks.* § 3. *The difference between ſcience, decree, and præſcience.* § 4. *That there are hypothetical tendencies and reſults independent of all will.* § 5. *The more freedom is claimed, the more certain the reſult of it.* § 6. *The juſt limits of the liberty of moral agents, and its conſiſtence with hypothetical neceſſity demonſtrated.* § 7—10. *The riſe and progreſs of the controverſy between the Calviniſts and Arminians, in which Mr.* FLETCHER *took ſo active a part.* § 11. *Arminian conceſſions.* § 12. *Obſervations on them.* § 13. *The chief cauſe of the different concluſions.* § 14. *The charge of God being made the author of ſin retorted.* § 15. *The nature of ſin.* § 16. *Self-perverſion is not the origin of ſin.* § 17. *Its true origin proved and explained.* § 18. *The conſiſtency of certainty and moral agency proved from the acknowledged certain futurition of events.* § 19. *The Arminian account of fore-knowledge inſufficient.* § 20, 21. *A fuller explanation of the preſent ſyſtem.*

ſyſtem. § 22—35. *Mr.* FLETCHER'S *moſt powerful and popular objections againſt Calviniſtic neceſſity, anſwered; whereby is ſhewn more fully the truth and importance of the ſyſtem here maintained, and the weakneſs of its oppoſite.* § 36. *Concluſions from the premiſes.*

§ 1. OF the *three pillars* before mentioned, (Sect. I. § 1.) on which the fabric of *Arminianiſm* reſts, this is one, That the *certainty*, or, as the Arminians chooſe to repreſent the caſe by a ſtronger term, the *neceſſity* of future events is *not conſiſtent* with that *freedom* which is eſſential to *moral agency*. Dr. WHITBY ſtrenuouſly contends that the will is free "as well from *Neceſſity*, as from coaction,"* to which he appropriates ſeveral chapters; and one in particular is entitled, "Propounding *Arguments from Reaſon* to evince this freedom of the will from Neceſſity."† Later Arminians, eſpecially Mr. FLETCHER, have ſaid much on the ſubject, though candid conceſſions have ſometimes been made, amounting nearly to all for which we contend, in the midſt, or at the more ſedate cloſe, of the moſt violent oppoſition. Mr. JONATHAN EDWARDS, without the Materialiſm and *mere* philoſophic mechaniſm of PRIESTLEY, or the unguarded bluntneſs and ſevere ſarcaſms of TOPLADY, made a noble effort to ſhew that the freedom of the will and moral agency are not inconſiſtent

* On the Five Points, p. 328. † Ibid. p. 344.

inconſiſtent with *all neceſſity*. But if we judge from the effect it has produced, we muſt infer either that his "Inquiry," is not rightly underſtood by our Arminian friends, or that there is ſome defect in his mode of repreſenting the ſubject, ſince Mr. FLETCHER has often conceded *the whole* of what Mr. EDWARDS profeſſedly contended for, i. e. That *Freedom* is conſiſtent with *ſome* neceſſity. The preſent writer has long thought, and ſtill thinks, that the ſubject has by no means been *exhauſted*, notwithſtanding all he has met with in ſcholaſtic and modern divinity, moral philoſophy and metaphyſics. If any additional or new light is, in theſe pages, thrown upon the ſubject, whereby may be diſcovered, that the *frightful gulfs*, which were ſuppoſed by *good people* on the oppoſite ſides to be *impaſſable*, are *fordable* and perfectly *ſafe*; by which means there may be among *ſuch* people a more free exchange of Chriſtian love and evangelical ſentiments; the author will have reaſon to conſider the circumſtance as one of the greateſt favours conferred upon him by providence, and one of the higheſt gratifications of his life.

§ 2. Before we proceed to inveſtigate the ſentiments propoſed, I would offer a few general remarks.

1. The reader ought not to overlook the *definitions* given of the *terms* under conſideration; eſpecially the terms "moral agency" and "neceſſity."* If by theſe terms the writer ſhould intend

* Chap. i. *paſſim*.

intend one thing, and the reader underſtand another, there is little hope of agreement, be the reaſoning what it may. What is here aſſerted, therefore, is, that this *hypothetical neceſſity*, or, in other words, the *truly future certainty* of an event, does not infringe moral agency in the accompliſhment of that event.

2. Though a great outcry has been made againſt the *antinomian tendency* of Calviniſm in general, and Calviniſtic *neceſſity* in particular, yet all, who have a grain of candour left among heaps of prejudice, muſt acknowledge, That thoſe who have held the *ſubſtance* of the doctrine here maintained, have been uniformly, and equally ſtrenuous for the exiſtence of *moral obligation*, the accountableneſs of man, and perſonal holineſs, with others who have oppoſed it; which is at leaſt a ſufficient exculpation of them from any *immoral deſign*. That *bad men* have eſpouſed *both ſides*, is no juſt impeachment of either. As, for inſtance, the *religious character* of Preſident EDWARDS having never been called in queſtion, our opponents themſelves being judges, any more than that of Mr. FLETCHER; it cannot be inferred that the patrons of hypothetical neceſſity are *avowed* oppoſers of moral agency and accountableneſs, or even that it produces ill effects in thoſe who hold it, *any more* than in thoſe who reject the ſentiment. Perhaps, could an eſtimate be fairly and extenſively made, the hypothetical neceſſitarians would not appear to diſadvantage by the compariſon; and, what is more, perhaps the *genuine tendency* of both ſyſtems may be ſhewn to be

decidedly in our favour. It is hoped that this publication may aſſiſt in ſuch an inquiry.

3. Among all *good men*, a regard for the *honour of God*, more than the *rights of man*, is the matter of holy jealouſy. And it gives me no ſmall pleaſure to reflect that our oppoſing brethren uniformly and openly avow their acquieſcence in theſe two grand AXIOMS:

I AXIOM. *All* GOOD *is of* GOD.

II AXIOM. *All* EVIL *is of* OURSELVES.

In the following pages, it is preſumed, it will appear, that no ſyſtem of religion or morals oppoſite to what is here defended, can be made fairly and truly to agree with *both axioms*.

4. Among modern writers of religious reſpectability, no one has appeared, on the *Arminian* ſide of the queſtion, with more polemical acumen, or more open deciſion, than the Rev. JOHN FLETCHER, in his numerous controverſial writings. Candour dictates, and the love of real godlineſs, that Mr. F's. character ſhould be held in great eſteem. His ardent love of GOD, and zealous efforts to reform, convert, and ſave ſouls; his humbling repreſentations of himſelf, and warm aſcriptions of praiſe to grace and the Saviour; his uſefulneſs as a miniſter, and in ſome reſpects as a writer; and his worth as a member of ſociety demand cordial acquieſcence. With ſuch acknowledgments, let it not be conſtrued a breach of chriſtian charity to *examine* his poſitions and reaſonings on the ſubject before us. It has been often ſaid, That if *all good men* did but *rightly underſtand* each other, there would appear much

much leſs difference between them than there is; and it is a remark, I am fully perſuaded, founded in truth. Should I therefore ſucceed (which may the GOD of love and wiſdom grant!) in giving the admirers of this writer a more *juſt*, and therefore a more *conciliatory* view of the *matter of difference* between what he avowedly held and what I conſider as real defenſible Calviniſm; I ſhall with heart-felt pleaſure infer, that I have not lived or laboured in vain. But,

§ 3. What claims our immediate attention is, the *proof* of what is propoſed, before we come to notice what has been *objected* to it; which is attempted by the following explanatory *Propoſitions.*

I. *Propos.* There is a real and important diſtinction between *ſcience*, *decree*, and *præſcience*, as applied to GOD.

1. *Science* relates and extends to *all poſſibles*, with all their diverſities and diſtinctions, as included in the divine all-ſufficiency.

2. *Decree*, being an *act* of the *divine will*, whereby one general ſyſtem is choſen, in preference to any other, in the numberleſs ranks of poſſibles, relates ONLY to the *adopted ſyſtem.* And as wiſdom is eſſential to Deity, the ſyſtem choſen muſt be a *wiſe* one; i. e. the beſt calculated to anſwer the *end* propoſed. Conſequently, without a decree there can be no actual or poſitive exiſtence.

3. *Præſcience* relates to the ſyſtem ſo adopted as to its *truly certain futurition.* — *Science*, therefore, relates to what *might* have been, had GOD willed it

to be, with an efficient or decretive will; *Decree* relates to all actual positive existence, whether past, present, or future; and *Præscience* to the certain futurition of such objects.

§ 4. II. *Propos.* There are *hypothetical tendencies* and results in the very nature of things, irrespective of *all will* concerning them. To elucidate this proposition, observe:

1. The divine *intellect* beholds all possibles, as contained in the divine all-sufficiency, *individually*; and the divine *wisdom* beholds the same objects *systematically*.

2. That there is a *negative* hypothetical tendency and result, both individually and systematically considered, is demonstrative from the consideration of the *passive power* essential to all created existence. For instance, IF GOD withdraw all support from a creature, it ceases to exist, &c.

3. That there is also a *positive* hypothetical tendency and result, relative to the individuals and the system, is equally demonstrative from the consideration of the *divine efficience*. For instance, IF GOD choose either good or evil, he will certainly choose good; IF he exert creating power, created effects will follow, &c.

§ 5. III. *Propos.* The more freedom we claim for any creature, the more firmly shall we establish the consequence, that, in the view of GOD, the tendency and *result* of that freedom is foreseen and provided for. In proof of this proposition observe,

1. The

1. The freedom of a moral ſyſtem implies the *poſſibility* of a deviation from rectitude. This enters into the very foundation of accountableneſs.

2. The *hypothetical reſult* of every moral ſyſtem poſſible is included in the divine ſcience. But,

3. If freedom implies defectibility, and the divine ſcience, or all-perfect knowledge, ſees the hypothetical reſult of all ſyſtems poſſible; it follows, that a decretive fixedneſs of *all the good*, from whence reſults the *certain futurition* of all events, is included in our clear and conſiſtent notion of divine goodneſs and wiſdom.

If a moral ſyſtem be formed *free*, in the higheſt ſenſe conceivable, and there be no *decretive* certainty of the reſult of it, as far as it is *good*; that ſyſtem is liable to perpetual ruin without a poſſibility of being retrieved. For, *as all good is from God*, he muſt either *decree* the reſult of it, or, on ſuppoſition of failure in the ſyſtem, *alter his plan*; which alteration to impute to the divine mind is unworthy of our notion of infinite perfection. If therefore it be unworthy of an infinite mind, alike, to operate *without* a plan, and to *alter* a plan once formed; and if nothing can be to HIM abſolutely contingent; the conſequence is unavoidable, that the *more free* the ſyſtem is, the more *liable* it is to perpetual *ruin*, without a poſſibility of being corrected and retrieved, if the goodneſs of the reſult be not decreed; an omiſſion which is incompatible with the divine *goodneſs*.

Again: To create a ſyſtem which may ruſh to ruin, without making a *decretive proviſion* for the

hypothetical *good reſult* of it, is inconſiſtent with all juſt notions of perfect *wiſdom*. Nor can it be queſtioned, without denying the firſt *Axiom*, that if the reſult be *good*, it muſt be of *God*. And that it ſhould be of GOD, without his *will*, or decretive purpoſe, is impoſſible.

1. *Coroll.* The higher we carry our ſuppoſition of *liberty*, the more firmly, in the genuine conſequence, do we eſtabliſh a decretive hypothetical *neceſſity*. The more I am left to *my own* diſpoſal, the more *neceſſary* is it for GOD to *take care of the reſult*; and to give *efficiency* for the production of good, in ſuch a manner as to *ſecure* a reſult worthy of his wiſdom and goodneſs in giving *exiſtence* to the moral ſyſtem.

2. *Coroll.* That there ſhould be in the univerſe ſuch a *liberty* in accountable creatures, or free agents, as excludes the *infallible certainty* of any future event, is impoſſible.

§ 6. IV. *Propos.* A moral agent has no more *liberty* than what is needful to conſtitute his accountableneſs. For,

1. In all thoſe caſes where accountableneſs is *not concerned*, philoſophical neceſſity is incontrovertible. The irrational part of the world is complete mechaniſm, a mechaniſm truly wonderful, and worthy of its Author! For what has no *moral* defect, is worthy of a Being infinitely perfect decretively to *appoint*, and powerfully to *effectuate*. Yet,

2. Were not the *reſult* of moral agency *known* to

to GOD, that reſult, be it what it may, (though, by the bye, it could not be *good* but by his *efficiency*) would be an everlaſting monument of degradation to his goodneſs and wiſdom. But,

3. For the knowledge of this reſult there muſt be *ſome* aſſignable reaſon, or ground of certainty, in oppoſition to perfect contingence. To deny this, would be to advance contradictions without cauſe; except it be the forming of a convenient plea to conceal, or rather to detect ignorance. Wherefore,

4. Inaſmuch as *all* creatures which are *not accountable* are the ſubjects of *neceſſity*, to the excluſion of that liberty which is exerciſed about moral good and evil; and *all* creatures, without exception, have a *paſſive power*, and an infallible *hypothetical tendency*, from the very nature of their dependence; hence it follows, that no created being, and conſequently no moral agent, has more liberty than what is needful to conſtitute his *accountableneſs*.

5. What conſtitutes *accountableneſs*, from our definition, is a *capacity* to enjoy the chief good; *means* of preſerving rectitude, or of not ſinning, both ſuitable and ſufficient; a *power* which excludes all *abſolute* neceſſity of ſinning, or abuſing means; and an *inſtrumental* power of improving them.

Now as theſe grounds of accountableneſs are perfectly conſiſtent with hypothetical neceſſity, and as a moral agent has no more liberty than what is needful to conſtitute his accountableneſs, it irrefragably follows, that *hypothetical neceſſity is not inconſiſtent with moral agency*. Q. E. D.

§ 7. To the generality of readers, who are not accuſtomed to abſtract reaſoning, and metaphyſical preciſion, the method which conſiders the ſentiments, and examines the *objections*, of the moſt able and ingenious writers in the oppoſition, is moſt inſtructive and convincing. The ability and celebrity of Mr. FLETCHER, as a writer againſt the Calviniſtic ſyſtem in general, and eſpecially that part of it which is the ſubject of the preſent article, have been before obſerved; and this conſideration, in my view, juſtifies a peculiar attention to his arguments and objections, as far as our immediate inquiry is concerned.

By way of *introduction* to the examination we propoſe, it will not be improper, or unacceptable to the reader, to notice the *occaſion* of his engaging ſo warmly on the Arminian ſide, eſpecially as this may throw ſome light on his *mode of expreſſion*. This I ſhall endeavour to do with all poſſible brevity.

In *Auguſt* 1770, the Rev. JOHN WESLEY, and the preachers in his connection, held a *conference* in London. Of the converſation which then paſſed ſome *minutes* were made and printed. From theſe minutes,* an extract was made and annexed to a circular

* Some of the expreſſions in that conference were: "Take heed to your doctrine. We ſaid, 1744, *We have leaned too much to Calviniſm*. Wherein? 1. With regard to *man's faithfulneſs*. 2. With regard to *working for life*. 3. We have received it as a maxim, That a man is to do nothing *in order* to juſtification: Nothing can be more falſe."

Again: "Is not this [i. e. he that is *ſincere* is accepted of GOD] *ſalvation by Works?* Not by the *merit* of works, but by works,

circular printed letter, drawn up and ſigned by the Hon. and Rev. WALTER SHIRLEY, purporting, That as Mr. WESLEY's conference was to be held at *Briſtol* on the approaching *Auguſt* 6th, 1771, it was propoſed by many chriſtian friends to have a meeting there at the ſame time, of ſuch principal perſons both clergy and laity, who diſapproved of the minutes; in order that, provided a formal recantation of the ſaid minutes were not made, they ſhould ſign and publiſh their *proteſt* againſt them. The letter concludes with theſe words: "It is ſubmitted to you, whether it would not be right, in the oppoſition to be made to ſuch a *dreadful hereſy*, to recommend it to as many of your chriſtian friends, as well of the Diſſenters, as of the eſtabliſhed Church, as you can prevail on to be there, the cauſe being of ſo *public* a nature."

§ 8. This circular printed letter, rouſed Mr. FLETCHER to write "A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. WESLEY's laſt Minutes," conſiſting of five Letters

works as a *condition*. — As to *merit* itſelf, of which we have been ſo dreadfully afraid: We are rewarded *according to our works*, yea, *becauſe of our works*. How does this differ from *for the ſake of our works?* And how differs this from *ſecundum merita operum?* As our works *deſerve?* Can you ſplit this hair? I doubt, I cannot."

Finally: "Does not talking of a juſtified or ſanctified *ſtate*, tend to miſlead men? Almoſt naturally leading them to truſt in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleaſing or diſpleaſing to GOD, *according to our works?* According to the whole of our inward tempers, and outward behaviour."

Vid. Mr. FLETCHER's *Vindic. Pref.*

Letters addreſſed to Mr. SHIRLEY, the author of it. To other more private reaſons which Mr. F. aſſigns for ſiding with Mr. W. on this occaſion, he adds the following: "The leave you give both Churchmen and Diſſenters, to direct to *you* their anſwers to your circular letter, are my excuſe for intruding upon you this epiſtle; and my apology for begging your candid attention, while I attempt to convince you that my friend's principles and minutes are not heretical: in order to this I ſhall lay before you, and the principal perſons both clergy and laity, whom you have from all parts of England and Wales convened at *Briſtol*, by printed letters,—a general View of the Rev. Mr. WESLEY's doctrine—an Account of the commendable deſign of his minutes—a Vindication of the propoſitions which they contain." This Vindication, finiſhed *July* 29, 1771, about five weeks, I believe, after the appearance of the circular letter, was ſent in *manuſcript* to *Briſtol*. To the honour of truth and religion be it obſerved, that the ſpirit manifeſted at the *Briſtol conference* was amiable; but the controverſy to which theſe ſmall beginnings gave riſe, was of no ſmall magnitude.

The Vindication of the minutes was conſidered by the author and his party as a ſeaſonable *check* to Antinomianiſm; Mr. SHIRLEY wrote a "Narrative" of the buſineſs; Mr. F. publiſhes a "*Second Check* to Antinomianiſm," in letters addreſſed to the ſame author; this ſecond check is followed by a publication of "Letters" addreſſed to Mr. F. by the reſpectable author of *Pietas Oxonienſis*;

enſis; Mr. F. publiſhes, early in 1772, a "*Third Check* to Antinomianiſm," in reply to that author; that author again rejoins in a ſeries of Letters, and his Rev. brother, Mr. R. HILL, by "Friendly Remarks;" in reply to both, Mr. F. produces "*Logica Genevenſis*; or, a *Fourth Check* to Antinomianiſm," in a ſeries of Letters to thoſe gentlemen; R. HILL, Eſq. author of the former productions, publiſhes "The Finiſhing Stroke;" Mr. F. replies in his "*Logica Genevenſis* continued: or, The *Firſt* Part of the *Fifth Check* to Antinomianiſm;" and at the ſame time the *Second* Part of the ſame check, addreſſed to Mr. BERRIDGE, author of the "Chriſtian World unmaſked."

§ 9. Now Mr. FLETCHER ſtops a little to take breath, after ſo long a polemical career, and to take a more comprehenſive view of *both ſides* the controverted queſtions. After this deliberate ſurvey, came out "The *Firſt* Part of an *Equal Check* to Phariſaiſm and Antinomianiſm," conſiſting of Eſſays, &c. and ſoon after the *Second* Part of an Equal Check, under a new Title, "Zelotes and Honeſtus reconciled; or, An Equal Check to Phariſaiſm and Antinomianiſm continued; being the *Firſt* Part of the *Scripture Scales.*" This was publiſhed at the cloſe of the year 1774; and followed the next year by the *Second* Part of the *Scripture Scales*, with Mr. HILL's fictitious, and Mr. F's. genuine creed for Arminians." Prefixed to the "Scripture Scales" is an Advertiſement, of which the following is an Abſtract: "The author of

of the *Checks* has promiſed to his readers an Anſwer to the Rev. Mr. TOPLADY's piece, entitled, *More Work for Mr. Weſley.* His reaſon for poſtponing *that part* of his *Logica Genevenſis*, was the importance of the *Equal Check*, which cloſes the controverſy with Mr. HILL. He ſaw life ſo uncertain, that, of two things which he was obliged to do, he thought it his duty to ſet about that which appeared to him the *more uſeful.* He conſidered alſo, that it was proper to have quite done with Mr. HILL, before he faced ſo able a writer as Mr. TOPLADY." And, *as contents* of his Preface to the laſt part of Zelotes and Honeſtus reconciled, or Second Part of Scripture Scales, he ſays: " The Reconciler invites the contending parties to end the controverſy; and, in order to this, he beſeeches them not to involve the queſtion in clouds of evaſive cavils, or perſonal reflections; but to come to the point, and break, if they can, either the one or the other of the Scripture Scales; and if they cannot, to admit them both, and by that means, to give glory to GOD and the truth, and be reconciled to all the goſpel, and to one another." Before the controverſy with R. H. Eſq. was *finally* cloſed, one volume more was publiſhed by Mr. F. as a kind of Supplement to his former *Creeds*, as mentioned in his preface to that volume, entitled " The laſt Check to Antinomianiſm, a Polemical Eſſay," &c. His own words are: " If the reader deſires to know, why I call it alſo a *Polemical* Eſſay, he is informed, that R. H. Eſq. (at the end of a pamphlet entitled, Three Letters written

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ten to the Rev. J. FLETCHER, Vicar of *Madely*) has publiſhed a *Creed for Arminians and Perfectioniſts.* The ten firſt Articles of this Creed, which reſpect the Arminians, I have already anſwered in *The fictitious and genuine Creed*; and the following ſheets contain my reply to the laſt article, which entirely refers to the *Perfectioniſts.*" *

§ 10. Our author now faces his very powerful antagoniſt, the Rev. AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, the author of "Hiſtoric Proof of the Calviniſm of the Church of England," and in 1776 publiſhes "An Anſwer to Mr. T's. More Work for Mr. J. WESLEY, or, A Vindication of the Decrees, &c." He introduces the Anſwer with this remark, among others of the ſame tendency, "When I had ſent for, and read this admired book, I promiſed my readers to demonſtrate, from that very book, the inconcluſiveneſs of the ſtrongeſt arguments by which Calviniſm is ſupported." In the mean time Mr. TOPLADY publiſhes the "Scheme of Chriſtian and Philoſophical Neceſſity;" which occaſioned Mr. F's. "Reply to the principal Arguments by which the Calviniſts and Fataliſts ſupport the Doctrine of Abſolute Neceſſity," publiſhed in 1777. In the courſe of the following year Mr. F's. prolific pen furniſhed the public with a work entitled "The Doctrines of Grace and Juſtice equally eſſential to the pure Goſpel; with ſome Remarks on the miſchievous Diviſions

* Laſt Check; Pref. p. 6.

Diviſions cauſed among Chriſtians by parting thoſe Doctrines. Being an Introduction to a Plan of *Reconciliation* between the Defenders of the Doctrine of *partial Grace*, commonly called Calviniſts; and the Defenders of the Doctrines of *impartial Juſtice*, commonly called *Arminians*." This publication includes ſome intereſting remarks on Grace and Juſtice; and the "Reconciliation: or, an eaſy Method to *unite* the profeſſing People of GOD, by placing the Doctrines of Grace and Juſtice in ſuch a light, as to make the candid Arminians, Bible-Calviniſts; and the candid Calviniſts, Bible Arminians." It includes alſo "a Two-fold Eſſay, i. e. Bible-Arminianiſm, and Bible-Calviniſm;" the *firſt* of theſe "diſplaying the doctrines of partial Grace, and the excellence of Scripture Calviniſm — the *ſecond*, the doctrines of impartial Juſtice, and the excellence of Scripture Arminianiſm." He then adds, a further "*Reconciliation*," by way of inferences from the Two-fold Eſſay; the *Plan* of a general "Reconciliation," with "ſome Directions how to ſecure the bleſſings of peace and brotherly love; with further motives to a ſpeedy Reconciliation."—Then follows, "An *Exhortation*" to conclude the whole, in a ſpirit and ſtyle truly Chriſtian. The topics are weighty, and the zeal with which they are urged is warm and loving.

It is hoped that this brief account of the riſe and progreſs of a controverſy between the *Calviniſts* and *Arminians*, the moſt important and intereſting on many accounts, I believe, which has appeared

appeared in the courſe of the preſent century, will not prove unacceptable to the reader who has not had opportunity of better information, nor appear an unſuitable introduction to our profeſſed *Examination* of the moſt radical arguments and forcible objections of modern Arminianiſm. And more eſpecially, as our *Eſſay* has for its object, at leaſt in good part, a *better underſtanding* between perſons, miniſters and people, who are *truly devoted to God*, than hitherto they have had.

§ 11. The reader will recollect, that we conſider the ſubject of the preſent article as of the utmoſt importance, in order to arrive at a fair iſſue. To *this point* were all the controverſial lines brought at the cloſe of Mr. FLETCHER's polemical efforts; and there, I add, he diſcovers at once the weakneſs of his *arguments*, and the failure of his *cauſe*. I cannot help obſerving here, that Mr. F. at his firſt ſetting out, in his Vindication of the Minutes, acknowledges moſt explicitly in connection with Mr. WESLEY, what appears to me virtually to imply my concluſion.

1. Man's *total fall*, and his *utter inability* to recover himſelf. Speaking of Mr. WESLEY he obſerves: "For above theſe ſixteen years I have heard him frequently in his chapels, and ſometimes in my church; I have familiarly converſed and correſponded with him, and have often peruſed his numerous works in verſe and proſe: and I can truly ſay, that during all that time I have heard him, upon every proper occaſion, ſteadily maintain the

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total fall of man in Adam, and his *utter inability* to recover himſelf, or to take any *one ſtep towards* his recovery, without the *grace* of GOD preventing him that he may have a *good will*, and working with him when he has that good will. The deepeſt expreſſions that ever ſtruck my ears, on the melancholy ſubject of our natural *depravity* and helpleſsneſs, are thoſe which dropped from his lips."*

This teſtimony is confirmed by Mr. WESLEY himſelf: "I always did (for between theſe thirty and forty years) clearly aſſert the *total fall* of man, and his *utter inability* to do *any good of himſelf*: the *abſolute neceſſity* † of the grace and ſpirit of GOD to raiſe even a *good thought* or *deſire* in our hearts: the Lord's rewarding no work, and accepting of none, but ſo far as they proceed from his *preventing*, *convincing*, and *converting grace* through the beloved."‡

Nay, Mr. F. conſiders this doctrine of ſuch magnitude, that he conſiders it the "leading principle in Chriſtianity, diſtinguiſhed from Deiſm —of ſuch importance, that genuine Chriſtianity ſtands or falls with it." ‖ Expreſſions, which are followed by a profeſſed "Rational Demonſtration of man's corrupt and loſt eſtate."

2. That *all our ſalvation is of God in Chriſt*, and therefore *of grace*; but *all our damnation* is of *ourſelves*.

* Vindication of the Minutes, p. 9.

† Here Mr. W. muſt underſtand the term "abſolute" in a vague and popular ſenſe, elſe he aſſerts a ſtronger kind of neceſſity, with regard to the exiſtence and power of Grace, than the Calviniſts themſelves.

‡ Vindic. of Min. p. 21.

‖ Appeal to Matter of Fact, &c. p. 11, 12. 4th edit.

ſelves. "Mr. WESLEY lays down, ſays Mr. F. two AXIOMS of which he never loſes ſight in his preaching. The firſt is, that ALL OUR SALVATION IS OF GOD IN CHRIST, and therefore OF GRACE; all opportunities, invitations, inclination, and power to believe being beſtowed upon us of mere grace—grace moſt abſolutely free:—but he proceeds further, for ſecondly, he aſſerts, with equal confidence, that according to the goſpel diſpenſation ALL OUR DAMNATION IS OF OURSELVES; by our obſtinate unbelief and avoidable unfaithfulneſs; as we may *neglect* ſo great ſalvation, deſire to be *excuſed* from coming to the feaſt of the Lamb, *make light* of GOD's gracious offers, *refuſe* to occupy, *bury* our talent, and act the part of the *ſlothful* ſervant; or, in other words, reſiſt, grieve, do deſpite to, and quench the ſpirit of grace BY OUR MORAL AGENCY." Mr. F. adds, "He is therefore perſuaded the moſt complete ſyſtem of Divinity is that in which neither of thoſe two AXIOMS is ſuperſeded: it is bold and unſcriptural to ſet up the one at the expence of the other." *

§ 12. On theſe remarkable poſitions I would obſerve:

1. If *all* men be ſo *totally* fallen, and *utterly* unable, to do any thing of themſelves, previous to divine *grace*, ſo that grace makes all the difference in the man reſpecting his *thoughts*, *will*, and obediential *ſteps*; and as it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that the *grace received* renders him *leſs dependent* on the *will*

* Vindic. of Min. p. 17, 18.

and *operation* of GOD than he was before, or that this grace has an exiſtence in the man ſomehow *detached* from the divine will and operation which firſt cauſed it; it follows that EVERY GOOD *thought*, *will*, and *work*, both firſt and laſt, muſt proceed from the *poſitive will of God*. But if ſo, he muſt not only have *foreſeen* but alſo *fore-ordained* ſuch *good thoughts*, &c. Therefore, all the good in man is derived from a *neceſſity of conſequence*. And, indeed, what poſſible medium can there be between ſuch neceſſity of good, and abſolute contingence? A contingence *abſolutely* impoſſible, as may be abundantly proved.

2. If, according to the *firſt axiom*, ALL our ſalvation is of GOD, even all *inclination*, and *power* to believe; and it is abſurd to imagine that any of that all is of GOD to the *excluſion* of his will and energy; we muſt infer that ALL our ſalvation is from the will and energy, and therefore the *purpoſe* of GOD. Wherefore, all our ſalvation flows from a *neceſſity of conſequence*. And as we maintain Free agency, as well as our opponents, we conclude from their own premiſes and conceſſions, that hypothetical Neceſſity and Free agency are *not inconſiſtent*.

3. But Mr. F. after Mr. WESLEY, according to the ſecond axiom, holds, that *all* our damnation is of *ourſelves*. And ſo do *we*. Yes, but he aſcribes it to AVOIDABLE unfaithfulneſs, by our MORAL AGENCY. And ſo do *we alſo*; if by "avoidable" is meant that there is no *abſolute* neceſſity why any ſhould fail of ſalvation, or, that there is no *poſitive* will, purpoſe, or decree *againſt* it. And this "avoidableneſs" is in virtue of "moral agency;"

agency;" as freedom from all poſitive urgency, or influence to evil *out of ourſelves* is eſſential to it. Conſequently, from the premiſes, laid down by our opponents themſelves, it follows, that the kind of neceſſity for which we plead, and moral agency, are *perfectly compatible.*

§ 13. Why, therefore, was Mr. F. ſo exceedingly alarmed at the doctrine taught by *Preſident* EDWARDS, ſince the doctrine, in general, he contended for was only an inference drawn, fairly drawn, from Mr. F's. own premiſes? And why does he call this very doctrine which he and Mr. WESLEY have taught us to maintain, "the grand error which ſupports the Calvinian and Voltairian goſpels?" *

The only reaſons I can aſſign for ſo wide a difference, and ſo warm a conteſt, between Mr. F. and his opponents, while their premiſes appeared to admit of the ſame concluſions, are ſuch as theſe.

1. CALVIN, TOPLADY, and perhaps I may add, EDWARDS himſelf, were not ſufficiently plain and explicit in rejecting what certainly they ought to have rejected, the ſuppoſition that *ſin is one link* in the chain of *decretive* neceſſity. Hence

2. Mr. F. takes up the notion that Preſident EDWARDS, and all other Calviniſts, "join their literary forces to bind man with the extenſive ſeries of adamantine links, which form the chain of *abſolute neceſſity.*" † While the ſubject was taken up in this way, and therefore inferred, "that the monſter *ſin* is the offſpring of GOD's Providence,

* Reply to the Calvinists, Introd. p. 4. † Ibid.

neceſſitation, creation, of GOD's will, of GOD himſelf," * what probability was there that the truth in queſtion could be found, or an accommodation effected between the contending parties?

One party, ſtrenuous for the honour of grace, but without aſcertaining the *baſis* on which reſts the *difference* between the cauſation of *good*, and the origin of *evil*, were only concerned to maintain the neceſſity of conſequence, or rather, *ſome kind* of neceſſity, in general, to the excluſion of abſolute contingency: while the other party thought it enough, to exhibit in the moſt hideous and horrible colours the dire conſequences which the doctrine of *abſolute* neceſſity draws after it. But as the preſent work diſavows, no leſs than Mr. F's. that pedigree of ſin which he is pleaſed to pronounce "*Calvinian*," but in reality is not ſo; may we not hope that thoſe who have been under this too common miſtake will candidly *re-examine* the ſubject, and adopt the juſt concluſion. For we not only acknowledge, that all ſin *is* from *ourſelves*, but have undertaken to demonſtrate, from firſt principles, that it *muſt* be ſo; and that, to the *utter excluſion* of the Arminian *ſelf-ſovereignty* of the will.

§ 14. But while we keep clear of both abſurdities, ſhewing on the one hand, that ſin is no more *cauſed* or *appointed* by the firſt cauſe, than cold is cauſed by the ſun, or darkneſs by light; and on the other, that ſelf-ſovereignty, in the common Arminian ſenſe, can no more exiſt in a created nature,

* Reply, p. 6.

nature, however exalted, than abſolute independence; we think that the Arminian account of the generation of ſin is *poſitively* and exceedingly diſhonourable to GOD. Beginning with ſin, they trace its genealogy no higher than man's *free-will.* Theſe are Mr. F's. words: "When you begin at *ſin* you can never aſcend higher than *free-will:* And when you begin at *God* you can never deſcend lower than *free-will.*" * But is not GOD the *author* of that free-will?—a *poſitive cauſe* of, what they hold ſin to be, a *poſitive effect?* And is not this making GOD the AUTHOR OF SIN?

We, no leſs than our opponents, refer ſin to the *free-will* of the creature as the *immediate* or ſecondary cauſe; but inſtead of tracing it thence, with the Fataliſts, to the firſt cauſe, or ſtopping there, to ſave *appearances*, with ſelf-determiners, but who *really* muſt refer it ultimately to GOD; we trace it to the *eſſential defectibility* of a created nature, which is neceſſarily implied in the eſſential *difference* that muſt ever ſubſiſt between a ſelf-exiſtent and a created nature. So that if the matter be well conſidered, GOD can be no more the author of ſin, *in any ſenſe whatever*, than he can be a *dependent* being; and, on the contrary, man's *free-will* can be no more the *ultimate origin* of ſin, than man can be the *neceſſary* cauſe of himſelf. Theſe conſequences may not ſtrike the reader at firſt view, but are fairly implied in the premiſes.

So far, therefore, is *ſin* from being, as Mr. F. repreſents it, the *ſeventh link* of the chain of Calviniſm,

* Reply, p. 7.

viniſm, and of which GOD is the firſt, that it is *no link* of it; ſo far from being the effect of ſix preceding voluntary impelling cauſes, *velut unda impellitur unda*, it is neither impelled nor countenanced by *any* of them. Not by GOD himſelf, the firſt of the chain; for a Being infinitely good cannot be the decretive cauſe, or indeed *any cauſe* of the greateſt evil, any more than he can be a *defectible* being; and if not GOD himſelf, neither alſo his will, decree, creating acts, neceſſitation, or impelling providence.

§ 15. Much miſunderſtanding in this debate has ariſen from want of agreement reſpecting the *nature* of ſin. We conſider it as "want of conformity unto, or tranſgreſſion of the law of GOD," or a *defect* of what *ought* to be, whether in diſpoſition or act. Mr. F. on the contrary, contends that it is "a *real thing*, and has a *poſitive cauſe*." * This he thought to eſtabliſh by what he thought an unanſwerable part of a dilemma: "If ſin *is* a real thing, or a *poſitive* moral crookedneſs of the will of a ſinner, and as ſuch has a *poſitive cauſe*; can that poſitive cauſe be any other than the *ſelf-perverſion* of free-will, or the *impelling decree* of a ſin-ordaining GOD?" † The latter ſuppoſition is chargeable with impious irrationality; and we ſay the former is removed but a few degrees from it. Sin is the offspring of ſelf-perverſion, this of free-will, and free-will is the offspring of GOD; all, on the ſuppoſition, poſitive cauſes of poſitive effects. Con-

* Reply, p. 15. † Ibid. p. 15.

Conſequently ſin, according to the Arminian ſyſtem, is faſtened on infinite purity by theſe adamantine links, GOD's *creating will* in making us free, and our created *freedom*, which is the grand parent of every ſin!

While men aſcribe to ſin a *poſitive entity* as oppoſed to *moral defect*, they either give to the free-will of men and devils a *creating* power, which is abſurd; or elſe they muſt trace up ſin *actually* to GOD. For their free-will was *impoſed* upon them by *creating will*; they were *neceſſitated* to have it; and from hence poſitive effects follow to the remoteſt acts of ſin. But this is diametrically oppoſite to our firſt *Axiom*. The abſurdity, and indeed the impiety of ſuch a conſequence, is fully ſufficient to expoſe Mr. F's. notion of the *nature* of ſin, as to the point in queſtion.

But how does Mr. F. defend *his* notion? "If it is no *real thing*, and has no *poſitive* cauſe; why does GOD poſitively ſend the wicked to hell for a privation, which they have not poſitively cauſed?"* Beſides, according to him, if ſin be only a *moral defect*, "it abſurdly follows, that crookedneſs, or the want of ſtraitneſs in a line, is a mere *privation* alſo." But which is moſt abſurd, to father ſin on infinite purity, or to admit that crookedneſs is a privation? Mr. F. thinks that reaſon and feeling are ſo much on his ſide, as to render null all arguments: "Reaſon and feeling tell us, that the crookedneſs of a crooked line, is ſomething every way as poſitive as the ſtraitneſs of a ſtrait line. To

* Ibid. p. 15.

deny it is as ridiculous as to aſſert that a circle is a *not-being*, becauſe it is not made of ſtrait lines like a ſquare." * In this repreſentation, there is one little circumſtance omitted to make the compariſon a fair one. We ſay, that ſin is a *moral* defect, a defect of what *ought* to be; and ſurely, if a line which *ought* to be ſtrait, be found crooked, its crookedneſs is a *defect*; if a figure which *ought* to be a ſquare, be found in fact a circle, its form is a *defect*.

The other enquiry, "Why does God poſitively ſend the wicked to hell for a privation, which they have not poſitively cauſed?" admits of a reaſonable ſolution. For we maintain, that the *nature* of future puniſhment conſiſts in the *want* of the chief good, together with a *conſciouſneſs* of that want; and which implies all that is deſcribed in ſcripture, however awful, of a future ſtate of ſuffering. Beſide, the *penal* evil of moral agents is not the *arbitrary* act of God, but the *natural* effect of ſin. Therefore, though ſin be a *moral defect* the conſequence of it is a *great evil*.

§ 16. For the ſake of looking at the oppoſite principles in various lights, and following them to their juſt conſequences, let us hear the author's account of the generation of ſin. "A *ſinful act* is the offſpring of a *ſinful choice*; a ſinful choice is the offſpring of *ſelf-perverſion*; and ſelf-perverſion *may* or *may not* follow from *free-will* put in a ſtate of probation, or under a practicable law." † But if the

*Ibid. p. 15. † Reply, p. 7.

the nature of ſin be not a *moral defect*, this account does not ſolve the difficulty. For to remove ſin from *free-will* to *ſelf-perverſion*, is only to remove the difficulty into the dark, leſt it ſhould be further examined. Bring it to the light, and you may ſoon obſerve its argumentative nakedneſs.

What is this ſaid ſelf-perverſion? Is it a *good* or an *evil?* Is it a ſomething *right* or *wrong?* If *evil* and *wrong*, why ſhould it be repreſented as the *parent* of a *ſinful choice*, is it not itſelf a ſin; except we ſay that *ſin* exiſts in the mind *prior* to any choice, and yet *free-will* is ultimate anceſtor of ſin? A genealogy this, full of confuſion and contradictions. Will it be ſaid that ſelf-perverſion is a ſomething *good* and *right?* This cannot be; for it is what *may* or *may not* follow from free-will, in ſuch a manner, that if it *do* follow, it becomes the parent of a ſinful choice; and if it *do not* follow, or has *no exiſtence*, then, and only then, ſin is prevented. Self-perverſion then muſt be a *bad* thing, a *ſin*, and the *cauſe* of a ſinful *choice*; but if ſo, if the choice be *ſinful becauſe* it originates in ſelf-perverſion, how can ſelf-perverſion, which is a *ſin*, originate in choice or free-will?

I aſk again, What is this *ſelf-perverſion?* If a *ſin*, it is of little uſe to bring it forward in order to ſolve the difficulty of *ſin's generation.* But if it be ſaid to be neither good nor evil, right nor wrong in itſelf; then it muſt I think be acknowledged to be either (1) Another *power* of the mind, different from the will; or, (2) A *modification* of the mind; or, (3) What we contend for, i. e. the *eſſential defectibility*

defectibility of a created nature, as ſuch, from whence ariſes a *moral defect*, which nothing but *unmerited grace* can prevent, or, if not actually prevented, remove.

Let us briefly examine each:

1. If ſelf-perverſion, the immediate parent of a ſinful choice, be *another power* of the mind different from the will, GOD muſt be the *voluntary author* of it, as he is of all our other powers. But this repreſentation of it as another *power*, probably, will not be aſſerted.

2. If ſelf-perverſion be a *modification* of the mind; an *effect* of a power; diſtinguiſhed from *freedom*, αὐτεξούσιον, *a ſelf-determining* POWER, as an effect from a cauſe; while at the ſame time ſin is held to be a poſitive effect of a poſitive cauſe; — who ſees not the horrible neceſſary conſequence of it? If ſelf-perverſion, thus underſtood, and which ſeems to be our author's meaning in common with other Arminians, be the effect, or offſpring of freedom, and freedom the offſpring of GOD; it follows unavoidably that the ſcheme I am oppoſing makes infinite holineſs to be the ſource of ſin, and with *fewer* links between than was aſcribed to Mr. TOPLADY'S chain of Neceſſity. A *ſinful choice* is the offſpring of ſelf-perverſion, ſelf-perverſion is the offſpring of *free-will*, and free-will is the offſpring of *God*. Whereas Mr. T. by Mr. F's. own ſtatement, removed ſin from GOD to the *ſeventh* link of the chain.

Thus it appears that Mr. FLETCHER, from a pious zeal, indeed, to vindicate the divine perfections

tions and government, coupled with a ſtrong *indiſcriminate* oppoſition to what he calls "Calvinian Neceſſity," falls into the evil which he wiſhed to avoid. To put the ſalvo, "which *may* or *may not* follow from free-will," is of no avail; ſince we are ſpeaking of the *actual generation* of *actual ſin*. When we are ſpeaking of the genealogy of a perſon, it would be curious to hear a man ſay, in order to avoid a difficulty in the evidence of his pedigree, that *another* much better, inſtead of the real one, *might have been* the deſcendant of his progenitor! And this, in order to avoid *all* neceſſity, is the genuine language of our opponents.

§ 17. 3. But as neither of the *former* ideas couched under the term *ſelf-perverſion*, can contribute to account for the *true cauſe* of ſin, the word, as uſed by Mr. F. muſt mean either *nothing* at all; or, what we contend for, that is, the *defectibility* which is eſſential to a created nature, as oppoſed to the uncreated. Here the inquiſitive mind has a rational reſting place; here, conviction muſt ſtrike every one that underſtands the ſubject; and here, we are conſtrained to ſay, it *ought* to be, and *muſt* be fixed. Yes, we have not only a *rational*, but alſo a *devotional* reſting place. The ſoul, thus ſituated, is awfully ſurrounded with ineffable rays of divine glories. From this point we view every perfection of Deity, both natural and moral, ſhining with reſplendent luſtre. Here we ſee the moſt exalted *creature*, in compariſon with the all-ſufficient and ſelf-exiſtent GOD, dependent, impotent, undeſerving,

ing, mean, the mere ſhadow (if I may ſo expreſs myſelf) of unoriginated exiſtence, and very little removed from nothing and vanity; and that creature, if the ſubject of moral defect, "*leſs* than nothing and vanity."

Now, as this *difference* between the Creator and creature, is not founded in the *divine will*, as if the ſovereign pleaſure *might* have ordered it otherwiſe, but in his *neceſſary nature*; it follows, that eſſential defectibility, the parent of ſin, is not imputable to the divine volition. The *prevention* of ſin, by poſitive communications to influence the *diſpoſition*, and every thing *good*, is indeed imputable to GOD as willing, decreeing, creating, providing, and hypothetically neceſſitating the ſame; but for the *production* of ſin, the eſſential weakneſs of the creature is *alone* ſufficient, without any poſitive cauſe. This, in other words, is the *hypothetical neceſſity of things*. It is called *hypothetical*, in oppoſition to *antecedent*. For there was no antecedent neceſſity that a creature ſhould exiſt: but IF, or on the *hypotheſis* that he *do* exiſt, it is *neceſſary*, and not a matter of *mere will*, that he ſhould exiſt on the condition of *abſolute dependence* on the firſt cauſe, and ſo be in himſelf *eſſentially defectible*.

Again: It is not *antecedently* neceſſary that GOD ſhould manifeſt his JUSTICE *ad extra*, giving to the accountable being nothing more than his *due*; but IF this be done, ſuch being will ſhew himſelf to be *what he is*, by a neceſſary conſequence; *viz.* eſſentially different from, and in *contraſt* with the infinitely perfect GOD.

Should

Should any be diſpoſed to ſay, This is to exiſt on *a hard condition*; I would anſwer with St. Paul, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt GOD? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus?" But if an anſwer in a more direct philoſophical manner be demanded, we may ſay, The *hypothetical nature of things* will admit of no other condition, on which we can poſſibly exiſt; and if any one conteſt the point, let him know that it is a conteſt about *ſuperiority* between a ſinful worm of the earth and the adorable Jehovah! In a word, to deny ſin to be *ultimately* the offspring of *hypothetical* neceſſity, though *immediately* of ourſelves, is to ſay, it is *poſſible* the ſituation of Creator and creature may be *reverſed!*

§ 18. Mr. F. admits of "the *neceſſity of prophecy*, or of *truly certain futurity*, which conſiders an event *certainly* future." * And elſewhere he obſerves; "One of the moſt common miſtakes, on which the Calviniſts found their doctrine, is confounding a *neceſſity of conſequence* with an *abſolute neceſſity*. A neceſſity of conſequence is the neceſſary connection, which immediate cauſes have with their effects — immediate effects with their cauſes — and unavoidable conſequences with their premiſes." † *This* neceſſity, it ſeems, our author had no objection to; and yet Preſident EDWARDS is coupled with VOLTAIRE becauſe he pleaded for *Neceſſity!* Who now confounds *neceſſity of conſequence* and *abſolute neceſ-*

* Reply, p. 10, 11. † Reply, p. 45.

neceſſity, Mr. F. the Arminian, or JONATHAN EDWARDS, the Calviniſt? For it is notorious to the moſt ſuperficial reader of EDWARDS, and from his moſt explicit definitions, that he pleads not for *abſolute* neceſſity, but for that of *conſequence* — the very ſame which Mr. F. allows! — But we muſt not leave this conceſſion without a few remarks:

1. Prophecies relate to *bad* actions as well as *good*. Now if ſin, or the ſinfulneſs of an action, be any thing but a *moral defect*, a want of what *ought* to be, it muſt have a poſitive cauſe, which runs up, by means of ſelf-perverſion and free-will, to the *creating cauſe* of that will. And therefore the actions, foretold by prophecy, and certainly future, muſt have GOD for their *primary impelling* cauſe. It was, for inſtance, in the days of prophecy, and from eternity, *certainly* future, that wicked men ſhould crucify Jeſus Chriſt. This atrocious deed, on the Arminian ſyſtem, would be the *effect* of ſelf-perverſion, and *that* the *effect* of free-will, and this latter the *effect* of GOD's creating power and *will*. Conſequently, this hypotheſis makes the moſt atrocious *evil* to be an effect, of which *God*, by a few removes, is the cauſe, the impelling cauſe, *velut unda impellitur unda*.

2. If *ſome* bad actions, not as moral defects, but poſitive effects of a poſitive cauſe, proceed from ſelf-perverſion, from freedom, and conſequently the author of that freedom, for the ſame reaſon *all* bad actions *might*. I ſay more; *all*, according to that ſyſtem, *muſt* be referred to GOD. No *logica Arminiana*, or enchantment, can ever break this chain.

chain. If *all ſin* be a *poſitive* effect of ſelf-perverſion, and if ſelf-perverſion be the *poſitive* effect of freedom, and if freedom be the *poſitive* effect of the divine providential and creating will; — *all ſin* terminates in the firſt cauſe of our exiſtence, as a *poſitive effect* of his will.

Mr. FLETCHER's remark is very juſt, "It is the property of error to be inconſiſtent," and holds peculiarly true in the preſent caſe. What our brethren profeſs a wiſh to avoid, above every thing, ſo the ſentiment, that GOD is the author, or voluntary cauſer of ſin; and yet no ſentiment ſo truly leads to this concluſion, or in a more direct manner than their's. Even Mr. TOPLADY's doctrine in the *worſt view* of it, Mr. F. himſelf being judge, placed ſin at a greater diſtance from GOD than what Arminians, to be conſiſtent with themſelves, are obliged to do.

3. If, as Mr. FLETCHER allows, there is a "neceſſity of prophecy," or an event foreſeen and foretold to be *certainly future*; the propoſition aſſerting this event is a *true* propoſition; and the ſubject and predicate of it muſt be truly and *certainly* connected. Mr. F's. diſtinction, therefore, between "that which DOES NOT FAIL *to happen*," and, "that which CANNOT ABSOLUTELY FAIL *to happen*," * appears groundleſs. For in proportion as you admit the propoſition "a thing propheſied of *may poſſibly fail* to happen," you deſtroy the *connection* between the ſubject and predicate, which affirms it to be *truly* and certainly future. And the

* Reply, p. 11.

the concluſion, in that caſe, would be, the prophecy *may poſſibly* be a *falſe aſſertion!*

4. If *ſome* things may be foreſeen and foretold to be truly and certainly future, and the crimes of men not excepted, for the ſame reaſon *all things* may be ſo; and without any more impeachment of the divine character, than Mr. F. would have attached to it. If there be, as he admits, *no* deduction from the holineſs and equity of GOD in admitting the *neceſſity* of ſuch prophecy as is *actually* declared; neither will there be, by admitting the neceſſity of *any other* future fact which *might have been* declared; except we ſhould ſay, that GOD has declared *all he knows.* Eſpecially when we conſider that his *declaring* a thing to be future, is not the *neceſſitating cauſe* of its futurition; for another cauſe of its exiſtence muſt *precede* its declaration.

§ 19. Here then we muſt at length coincide, that *every* thing and event in futurity is foreſeen as *truly certain.* But a great difference lies between us as to the mode of accounting for this fact. Arminians aſcribe this knowledge of the *certain futurition* of events to the *divine omniſcience* in ſuch a manner, as that it foreſees every mind, every free-will, every "voluntary unneceſſitated *obedience* on the part of thoſe who make a *good* uſe of their free-will;" and every "voluntary unneceſſitated *diſobedience*, on the part of thoſe who make a *bad* uſe of it." * But this account leaves you

* Reply, p. 7.

you quite in the dark; for it makes GOD *as much* the author of *ſin* as of *holineſs*, obedience being as much *unneceſſitated* as diſobedience. To which we may add, ſince GOD is *as much* the parent of one man's free-will as of another's, he bears the *ſame* relation to diſobedience as he does to obedience.

Here again we have met, and, may we not ſay, foiled our opponents, "at the back door of their inconſiſtency." Mr. F's. great outcry againſt Calviniſm was, that, as he thought, it led to *Manichæiſm*; and to avoid this frightful bugbear he fell back upon *Free-will* as the ſupreme parent of obedience and diſobedience, *good* and *evil*. May not this *Free-will*, therefore, be complimented as a *Manichæan Deity?*

But this is not all: *Free-will* itſelf is, we all allow, the offspring of *God*. Does not the Arminian ſyſtem, then, as held by Mr. F. in a direct and barefaced manner, father upon the author of our nature both *good* and *evil?* And is not this as direct Manichæiſm as Mr. F. ever fathered on Mr. TOPLADY's ſcheme ill underſtood?

§ 20. Not content with barely ſhewing the inconſiſtency and abſurd conſequences of the ſyſtem I am oppoſing, it is my wiſh, if poſſible, to give my readers fully to underſtand the ſyſtem I am now eſtabliſhing, under the name of *true Calviniſm*, in oppoſition to Mr. F's. *frightful picture* of what he is pleaſed to call, on every occaſion, "Calvinian Neceſſity." What is now pleaded for is utterly repugnant to the hypotheſes that make *all actions*,

the good and bad alike, to proceed from the *divine decrees*. For,

1. *Bad* actions, as before obſerved, ariſe from *ourſelves*, as *eſſentially* not *decretively* defectible; and not from a *poſitively good* ſelf-determining *principle*, the abſurd and impoſſible ſource to which Arminians refer them. It will not avail to ſay, that the *abuſe* of free-will, and not free-will itſelf is the cauſe of ſin; for ſuch *abuſe*, if any thing *bad*, is itſelf the firſt-born of ſins. Is it not aſtoniſhing that inquiſitive Free-willers, in the Arminian ſenſe of the word, do not ſee the neceſſary conſequence of their doctrine, that it makes GOD himſelf the poſitive cauſe and ordainer of ſin?

2. Inſtead of repreſenting the bleſſed GOD as a fountain ſending forth "ſweet water and bitter," the preſent ſyſtem repreſents the adorable Creator as the ſource of *good only*, and of *all good*, univerſally and continually. We ſay, that evil, or *moral defect*, originates in *ourſelves*, that is, our eſſential defectibility, in ſuch a manner, that *God alone* can prevent its exiſtence; and that, not in virtue of Equity but of ſovereign *favour*. The denial of this, is in fact the ſame thing as to ſay, that GOD might, if he pleaſed, make a creature which needed no ſupport, and with whom his providence had no concern.

§ 21. But, ſtill more cloſely to purſue our ſubject, what is this eſſential *defectibility*, or what is the *hypothetical nature of things?* Is not GOD the author of that being who is thus defectible? Yes, of the *being*,

being, but not of his *defectibility*. His exiſtence and natural powers are the effect of the *poſitive will* of God; but his *defectibility* is no *object* of creating power and *will*, for it is not *optional* in God whether a creature, in itſelf conſidered, ſhall be defectible, but ariſes from the conditional neceſſity of things. But is there *any neceſſity of things* independent on the *mere will* of God? In reply to this queſtion I would put another: Is it the *mere will* of God that conſtitutes a difference between himſelf and a creature? Is not this difference founded on *hypothetical* neceſſity, ſuperior to *all will?* As truly ſo as God's own exiſtence is of *abſolute* neceſſity? Again: Is it by the *mere will* of God that he is, and continues to be *what he is?* or, that a *creature* ſhould not be omnipotent, omniſcient, omnipreſent, &c.? Is it not ſober language to ſay, that this is *impoſſible?* For, *if* there be another being beſide the *firſt cauſe*, it is *neceſſary* he ſhould be limited in his power, knowledge, preſence, &c. And thus it is demonſtrable, that, without recurring to *fataliſm*, there is an *hypothetical* neceſſity ſuperior to all will.

Is not this making moral evil *abſolutely neceſſary?* No; not in the leaſt degree. For,

1. Created exiſtence is not *abſolutely* neceſſary. *If*, indeed, God exert creating wiſdom and power, it is *neceſſary* this creature ſhould be inferior to himſelf, and the ſubject of many limitations. But this neceſſity, it is plain, is only *conſequential*. Nor is it proper to ſay that theſe limitations are the objects of decretive will. For a *decree* implies,

properly ſpeaking, a power of doing otherwiſe, antecedently; as it would be abſurd to ſay that GOD decrees *not to make* a ſelf-exiſtent being; or, *not to make* man independent, or indefectible, conſidered in himſelf.

2. The creatures' defection, or ſin, is not *abſolutely* neceſſary. For, GOD *might* have preſerved *all* his rational creatures, *if* it had pleaſed him, in a way of ſovereign grace, in a ſtate of integrity. But IF a rational creature be dealt with according to EQUITY, it would be equal to GOD himſelf if it did not fall; that is, the *neceſſity* of its falling into ſin, though not *abſolute*, is yet *hypothetical*. In other words, IF GOD give the creature what is, in ſtrictneſs, its *due*, it *neceſſarily ſhews itſelf* to be eſſentially different from the holineſs, independence, and indefectibility of its Maker.

May we not at length venture to ſay, that the ultimate or true *origin of evil*, as a *moral defect*, has been fairly *demonſtrated?* The ſteps are eaſily perceived, and the connection between them is ſuch as exiſts between the ſubject and predicate of a true propoſition; the truth of the connection not depending upon, but ſuperior to *all will*. IF GOD, for inſtance, create Adam, it does not depend on the divine *will*, whether he be *dependent* or not, but, he *muſt* be ſo of neceſſity; IF dependent, in like manner, he *muſt* be defectible, for no creature, conſidered in himſelf, can be otherwiſe in virtue of any divine *volition*; IF defectible, and left in *equity*, that is, enjoying nothing more than its real and ſtrict *due*, it does not in the leaſt depend on the

will

will of God whether or not he become thereby the ſubject of *moral defect*, any more than whether two and two make four, rather than five; or whether a juſt inference be or be not connected with its premiſes. Thus every creature, however exalted, ſtands infinitely beneath God! The height of the divine majeſty can never be ſufficiently adored! How tranſcendent the glories and prerogatives of the ſelf-exiſtent I AM, in compariſon with the worm of earth, man, with angels, with a moral ſyſtem, with the aggregate of all worlds! *O the depth!*

This view of the ſubject is well adapted to fill the thoughtful mind with reverential awe. But what tranſporting joy, as well as ardent love, enlarged benevolence, and ſincere ſatisfaction may not be deduced from the other view of it! Gracious ſovereignty preſides over all! *God is love*, his goodneſs is a boundleſs and fathomleſs ocean, and his mercy endureth for ever! In reference to this great ſubject, above all others, are thoſe words of our Lord truly important; "Every one that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted." *

Theſe views, if I am not miſtaken, moſt exactly and unexceptionably correſpond with the whole tenor and every part of Scripture. I know of neither precept nor promiſe, invitation nor threatening, which is not in perfect harmony with the above repreſentations. On the contrary, the Arminian hypotheſis, I think it is fairly ſhewn,

* Luke xviii. 14.

tends to rob GOD of his rights of ſovereignty, and fathers all the ſins in the univerſe, tho' not deſignedly, yet eventually, on the *author* of free-will. While the *abſolute* neceſſitarians, as moſt of the modern pretended *rational*, excluſively rational *divines* are, together with infidel ſpeculatiſts, from whoſe pernicious opinions ſome Calviniſts, thro' better motives and for different ends, have not kept quite clear — while *ſuch neceſſitarians*, I ſay, who make *moral evil* of poſitive and voluntary appointment, as one *link* of a *decretive chain*, muſt either father ſin upon the *decreer*, or deny the exiſtence of ſin, as diſtinct from *natural* evil, and conſequently of a *moral* ſyſtem.

To this we may add, the ſyſtem now advanced attributes what is *good* in all actions to GOD; not only the *power* but the *natural act*; even the *natural* act of actions *morally* bad; which cauſation is *poſitive*, and every way worthy of an infinitely good and perfect being. But all moral defect, or ſin, is the *obliquity* of an act naturally good; which obliquity, in every ſhape and reſpect, has only a *deficient cauſe*, and therefore infinitely remote from all divine cauſation.

§ 22. There is no method, perhaps, more effectual, in order to eſtimate with impartiality the merits of any ſyſtem, than that of trying it by the force of *objections* brought againſt it by able oppoſers. Indeed no ſyſtem of morals or of religion is capable of ſuch demonſtration as utterly excludes all plauſible objections; even the firſt principle

principle of morals, the being of GOD, not excepted. Yet, when the ſtrongeſt objections are urged with ingenuity and ſtrength, and the fabric ſtands againſt every aſſault, men of integrity will be conſtrained to forbear the raſhneſs of a haſty condemnation. The objections urged by Mr. FLETCHER, in his numerous writings againſt Calviniſm, are very abundant; but thoſe which he urges with the greateſt confidence, are ſuch as the following:—(1.) That we confound the *different kinds* of neceſſity, and maintain that all actions, bad as well as good, are *abſolutely* neceſſitated.—(2.) That we do not diſtinguiſh between certainty of *knowledge* and peculiar *influence*.—(3.) That calviniſtic neceſſity cannot exiſt, ſince the time of our *birth* and *death* is not abſolutely fixed.—(4.) That we *multiply* the decrees unneceſſarily.—(5.) That we aſcribe *too abſolute* a dependence upon GOD, in reference to adults, tho' not to infants.—(6.) That the *connection* between election and reprobation is *unavoidable*, and therefore ſhocking.—(7.) That we repreſent GOD as *permitting* ſin.—(8.) That GOD *cannot neceſſitate free agents* without *deſtroying their nature*. In examining theſe objections, I ſhall ſtate them in our author's own words, with all the impartiality in my power.

§ 23. (1.) It is objected that we confound the *different kinds* of neceſſity. Thus Mr. FLETCHER: "One of the moſt common miſtakes, in which the Calviniſts found their doctrine, is confounding a *neceſſity of conſequence* with an *abſolute neceſſity*." To

ſhew that Mr. F. himſelf made a proper diſtinction and well underſtood the difference, he proceeds to define and illuſtrate neceſſity of conſequence: "A neceſſity of conſequence," ſays he, "is the neceſſary connection, which immediate cauſes have with their effects—immediate effects with their cauſes—and unavoidable conſequences with their premiſes,—Theſe *neceſſities of conſequence*" introduced for illuſtration, "do not amount to one grain of *Calvinian abſolute neceſſity*."* This repreſentation is neither candid nor true. On the contrary, the main body, if not all of the modern Calviniſts, entirely reject the latter in favour of the former. And if Mr. TOPLADY ſometimes expreſſed himſelf in an unguarded manner, ſo as to miſlead the incautious, his *profeſſed* object was to maintain the ſame kind of neceſſity with Mr. JONATHAN EDWARDS, in his Treatiſe on the WILL; who, as every one acquainted with that work knows, maintained the neceſſity of conſequence excluſively. "When," ſays Mr. EDWARDS, "the ſubject and predicate of the propoſition, which affirms the exiſtence of any thing, either ſubſtance, quality, act, or circumſtance, have a full and certain connection, then the exiſtence or being of that thing is ſaid to be neceſſary in a *metaphyſical* ſenſe. And IN THIS SENSE I uſe the word *neceſſity*, in the following Diſcourſe, when I endeavour to prove that neceſſity is not inconſiſtent with liberty."† Nay this writer is, if poſſible, ſtill more explicit: "Things which are perfectly connected with other things that

* Reply to TOPLADY, p. 45. † EDWARDS's Enquiry, p. 23.

that are neceſſary, are neceſſary themſelves, by a *neceſſity of conſequence. All things which are future,* or which will hereafter begin to be, which can be ſaid to be neceſſary, are neceſſary *only in this laſt way.* Their exiſtence is not neceſſary *in itſelf*; for if ſo they always would have exiſted. — And therefore *this* is the neceſſity which eſpecially belongs to controverſies about the acts of the will." *

It muſt however be acknowledged, that neither of theſe writers are ſufficiently guarded reſpecting GOD being, *in no ſenſe,* the author of ſin. "If," ſays Mr. EDWARDS, "by the *author of ſin,* is meant the permitter, or not a hinderer of ſin; and, at the ſame time, a diſpoſer of the ſtate of events, in ſuch a manner, for wiſe, holy, and moſt excellent ends and purpoſes, that ſin, if it be permitted or not hindered, will moſt certainly and infallibly follow: I ſay, if this be all that is meant by being the author of ſin, I do not deny that GOD is the *author of ſin,* tho' I diſlike and reject the phraſe, as that which by uſe and cuſtom is apt to carry another ſenſe." † To me there appears an utter *impropriety* in this mode of ſpeaking, however guarded. If ſin be a *defect* of what *ought to be,* its cauſe muſt be a *deficient* one; from which GOD is infinitely remote. In the preſent caſe, the word *author* muſt be of the ſame import with *cauſe*; but *in no ſenſe whatever* is GOD the *cauſe* of ſin. To be "a diſpoſer of the ſtate of events" worthy of GOD, is to be the cauſe of *good only.* The truth is, Mr. EDWARDS was not entirely free from the falſe

* Enquiry, p. 25. † Ibid. 357.

falſe notion of the *origin of evil*, viz. that it is the reſult of circumſtances, aſſociations, and combinations, *without us*; whereas, in reality, theſe make *no part* of its origin, or cauſe. If ever this awful ſubject become more truly and generally underſtood, it will be, I apprehend, when thoſe who inveſtigated it have a juſt and conſiſtent notion of PASSIVE POWER in its nature, cauſes, and effects.

Mr. F. however was of opinion that our divines, and Mr. EDWARDS among others, could not even diſtinguiſh between *metaphyſical* and *abſolute* neceſſity; or if they could, made no uſe of the diſtinction. "If the reader," ſays he, "is pleaſed to advert to this diſtinction between a *neceſſity of conſequence* and *abſolute neceſſity*, he will be able to ſteer ſafe through a thouſand calvinian rocks." * If *this* be the cauſe of ſteering ſafely thro' dangers, it ſhould ſeem the Calviniſts are not more expoſed to the hazards and horrors of ſhipwreck than the Arminians.

Mr. FLETCHER aſcribes to Calviniſm another "confuſion" with as little propriety as he did the former; when he ſays, "They perpetually confound *natural* neceſſity with, what may (improperly ſpeaking) be called *moral* neceſſity;" and then exclaims: "Now can any thing be more unreaſonable than to infer that ſervants can no more help obeying their maſters, than children can help being born with two hands? Is it not abſurd thus to confound *natural* and *moral* neceſſity?" † Very abſurd, no doubt; and let thoſe who are indeed guilty

* Reply to TOPLADY, p. 48. † Ibid. p. 49.

guilty of ſuch a blunder lie under the merited imputation.

Mr. F. thought himſelf perfectly ſecure from ſuch imputation; yet, perhaps, the weight of it really falls upon *his ſyſtem* with greater force than upon *ours*; nay, his ſyſtem is more expoſed than even the *caricature* he has drawn of Calviniſm. Hear him: "That *nothing* happens *independently* on that cauſe, [the ſupreme firſt cauſe] and on the providential laws, which GOD has eſtabliſhed, we *grant*." * Here is, in the firſt inſtance, every thing *granted* that the moſt rigid neceſſitarian pleads for. *Nothing* happens *independently* on GOD, and his *appointment*, which is implied in "the providential laws which GOD has eſtabliſhed." Take alſo into the account our author's opinion, that ſin is *a poſitive ſomething*, which has a poſitive cauſe, and you will ſoon infer, without any laboured deduction, that he makes GOD the ſupreme firſt cauſe of ſin. To mend the matter he adds: "But this does not prove at all the calvinian neceſſity of *all* our actions." No, not the *calvinian neceſſity*, which makes *only good* actions to be cauſed in the manner before mentioned; but it proves *more*, it proves that our *bad* actions, as well as our good, proceed from the ſupreme firſt cauſe.

§ 24. Again: "Confuſion reigns in every part of Babel; another capital miſtake of the neceſſitarians conſiſts in their confounding *prophetic* neceſſity, or rather prophetic certainty, with *abſolute* neceſſity. An illuſtration will explain my meaning.

* Ibid. p. 49.

meaning. Mr. TOPLADY diſcovers a boy, who is obſtinately bent upon theft. From his knowledge of the force of indulged habits, he foreſees and foretells, that the boy one day will come to the gallows; and his prediction is fulfilled." The queſtion is then put concerning the boy, "Might he not have reformed, and died in his bed?"* Undoubtedly he might, for aught that GOD did to hinder him. But on prophetic certainty, in addition to what was ſaid before on the ſubject, and on the caſe introduced for illuſtration, I would remark:

1. *Prophetic certainty* is, an *unerring* declared foreſight of ſome future *event*; and the *certainty* of that *event* muſt be in exact proportion to the certainty of the *knowledge* and *veracity* of the prophet. Therefore,

2. The queſtion, "Might he not have reformed, &c.?" is the ſame as to ſay, Might not the prophet be either *ignorant* or *falſe?* If ſo, why ſhould any thing he ſays be called "Prophetic certainty?" Rather ſhould it not be called A blind conjecture, or deliberate falſhood? But,

3. If the event be prophetically *certain*, then there is a certain connection between the ſubject and the predicate of the propoſition affirming it; or, the event follows with the ſame degree of certainty as the connection of the parts of the propoſition. If the event *might* be otherwiſe than what the prediction aſſerts, the connection between the parts of the proportion *might* be *falſe*. And ſuch prophecies, I ſhould think, would be more properly

* Ibid p. 50.

perly denominated *uncertain prophecies*, or *prophetic uncertainty.*

Mr. F. aſſerts, "The neceſſity of fulfilling the ſcripture, with reſpect to our Lord, could never amount to the leaſt degree of *abſolute*, calvinian neceſſity." † The neceſſity of calviniſts is, not what Mr. F. is pleaſed to ſay of it, but a *neceſſity of conſequence.* And we argue, IF chriſtianity, and redemption by the death of Chriſt, be a part of a grand ſcheme to be accompliſhed, it was *neceſſary* he ſhould die the juſt for the unjuſt. This is the neceſſity we contend for; but thus explained, That the *ſinfulneſs* of men was not *cauſed* but only *foreſeen*, while the *benefits* attending his death were *both* foreſeen and cauſed.

Moreover: "When we meet with ſuch ſayings as theſe," ſays Mr. F. "*This that is written* MUST *be accompliſhed in me:—The ſcriptures* MUST *be fulfilled*, &c. if they relate to Chriſt, they only indicate a *neceſſity of* RESOLUTION, if I may uſe this expreſſion: Now a neceſſity of reſolution is the very reverſe of *abſolute* neceſſity." ‡ Quere: Was this *reſolution* any thing different from the *purpoſe* of God-man? And was the latter any thing different from an expreſſion of the divine *decree?* It is true, GOD was under no *antecedent* neceſſity to form *any* reſolution, purpoſe, or decree; but when the reſolution was made, that the Saviour, for inſtance, would die for ſinners, was not the *connection* between the reſolution made and its accompliſhment *certain*, INFALLIBLY certain? Or is there any medium between *certain* and

† Ibid. p. 51. ‡ Ibid. p. 51, 52.

and *uncertain?* Was not the propoſition, *Jeſus will die for ſinners*, true and therefore certain from eternity? The *neceſſity* was *hypothetical*, becauſe it originally depended upon WILL, and a great number of facts and circumſtances in time were *conditionally ſuppoſed*, but the *certainty* admitted of no degrees or exceptions. This is *all* we contend for, with reſpect to thoſe things which it is unworthy of GOD efficiently to *cauſe*.

§ 25. (2.) We are again charged with confounding certainty of *knowledge* with peculiar *influence*. "All the difficulties," ſays Mr. FLETCHER, "which the Calviniſts have raiſed, with reſpect to the conſiſtency of divine *fore-knowledge* and human *free-will*, ariſe from two miſtakes: The firſt of which conſiſts in ſuppoſing that the ſimple, certain knowledge of an event, whether paſt, preſent, or future, is neceſſarily connected with a peculiar influence on that event: and the ſecond conſiſts in meaſuring GOD's *fore-knowledge* by our own, and ſuppoſing, that becauſe we cannot propheſy with *abſolute* certainty, what free-willing creatures will do to morrow, therefore GOD cannot do it." ‡

I am not diſpoſed to admit either of theſe charges as founded in juſtice towards calviniſts, notwithſtanding the quotation produced from TOPLADY, and the confident aſſertion which follows it. "I have dwelt the longer upon this head," ſays Mr. F. "becauſe it is the ſtrong-hold of

‡ Ibid. p. 54.

of the Calviniſts, from which Mr. T. ſeems to bid defiance to every argument, witneſs his aſſertion: FORE-KNOWLEDGE, *undarkened by the leaſt ſhadow of* IGNORANCE, *and ſuperior to all poſſibility of* MISTAKE, *is a link which draws* INVINCIBLE NECESSITY *after it.*" In oppoſition to this, Mr. F. aſſerts: "So ſure as the bible is true, Mr. T. is miſtaken;" and then refers to 1 Sam. xxii. 10—12. where the Lord ſays concerning Saul, *He will come down*; and of the men of *Keilah*, *They will deliver thee up*: neither of which took place. From the whole he concludes: "So far was his clear fore-knowledge, and peremptory prophecy of GOD, from drawing *invincible neceſſity* after them, that Saul did not come to *Keilah*; neither did the men of *Keilah* deliver David into his hands."*

Had Mr. FLETCHER called in candour to his aid to determine Mr. TOPLADY's real meaning under the controverted terms, the difficulty raiſed would have had no exiſtence. By *Fore-knowledge* Mr. T. evidently meant one thing, and Mr. F. another. The former intended by it that *preſcience* which includes the *certain futurition* of an *event*; the latter intended, as appears from his illuſtration, that *ſcience* which regards only the *hypothetical tendencies* of things; and which tendencies may be over-ruled by other ſuperinduced cauſes. Beſide, is not *hypothetical* neceſſity *invincible*, in as much as IF a propoſition be true, the ſubject and predicate of it are *invincibly* connected; IF the premiſes of a ſyllogiſm be true, the conſequence *invincibly*

* Ibid. p. 55.

vincibly follows: no poſſible oppoſition can prevent the connection of the one, or conſequence of the other.

But ſuppoſing Mr. T. had alſo included the idea of a "peculiar influence" on an event; it does not follow that this influence proceeds from, or is exerted by fore-knowledge. We ſay that *all good* in the univerſe is done *efficiently* by Jehovah, and therefore that he *reſolved* or *decreed* to do it; for, will any one ſay, that he does in time what he did *not intend* to do before time? We ſay alſo, that *no evil* in the univerſe is *effected* by him, and therefore no evil was ever intended to be effected by him; for this would be making him like ourſelves in the worſt ſenſe. Yet, from our abſolute dependence on GOD and the conſequent defectibility of a dependent nature, the evil we do may be as clearly and certainly foreſeen by the all-comprehending mind as any two quantities, one poſitive, and the other negative, and the ſum of their difference.

§ 26. One might be led to think from Mr. FLETCHER's objections to Calviniſm, on account of the difficulties he is pleaſed to attach to it, that while our ſide is dark and perplexed, his own was bright with ſuperior evidence. But how does he clear the difficulty? "Future contingent events," ſays he, "are clearly ſeen of GOD: this foreſight of GOD has not the leaſt influence on ſuch events: GOD can foretel ſuch events as contingent."* Now reader,

* Reply, ut ſupra.

reader, is the difficulty removed, or the cauſe of it in the leaſt degree pointed out?

"Future contingent events." Are there any events, then, contingent to *God?* Or are they contingent, only in reference to *our* want of comprehenſion? If an event proceeding from free agency be contingent to him, the propoſition which prophetically declares an event *certainly future*, is yet itſelf an *uncertain propoſition*. If the idea of contingency refer to us, whoſe comprehenſion is limited; who ever denied, that GOD fore-knows as certain what we do not?

"The foreſight of GOD has no influence on events." But he is the *ſupreme firſt cauſe* of all things, and his providence is regulated by laws of his own appointment. If therefore his *foreſight* has no influence, his ſupreme cauſation of all entities, and his plan of providence, muſt have *great* influence. Nay, if Mr. F's notion of ſin, that it is *ſomething poſitive*, be ſuppoſed, we muſt alſo ſuppoſe, that ſin is as much cauſed by the Creator as holineſs. Of what uſe is it, therefore, to contend that mere foreknowledge does not influence? And what becomes of the two great *axioms*, That all good is from GOD, and all evil from ourſelves?

Is there the ſame difficulty on our ſide? No. For, while GOD appoints and effects the good, he only foreſees the evil, which free agents will perpetrate without his cauſing it; for he ſees, with infinite preciſion, all hypothetical tendencies, *paſſive* as well as active. And, while treating on

this ſubject, it is a remark we ſhould never forget, that there is *no action* of a free agent but has *ſomething* in it worthy of GOD, that is, the *natural* or phyſical part, which is the reſult of general laws and providential agency on the part of GOD, and concurrence on the part of man; and *ſo far*, but no farther, is GOD the *cauſe* of it. The defect or obliquity of the act is the free agent's *excluſively*. Hence alſo appears, in part, the futility of the following objection.

§ 27. (3.) "GOD could never," ſays Mr. F. "calviniſtically appoint the BIRTH of *all* children, without calviniſtically appointing their conception, and every means conducing thereto."* The charge runs yet higher: "If calviniſm is true, he *abſolutely appointed*, yea neceſſitated all the adulteries and whoredoms, with all the criminal intrigues and ſinful luſts of the fleſh, which are inſeparably connected with the birth of baſe children. Now this doctrine makes GOD the author of all thoſe crimes, and repreſents him as the moſt inconſiſtent of all lawgivers: ſince by his moral decrees he forbids, and by his Calvinian decrees he enjoins whoredom and adultery, in order to fabricate the link of the birth of every baſtard child."†

Were theſe charges well founded, I ſhould think it neceſſary without delay to change my principles. But were any one to tell me, as an advocate for the calviniſtic neceſſity explained in this book, that my ſyſtem involves theſe conſequences; it would be

* Ibid. p. 57. † Ut ſupra.

be ſufficient, as the reverſe is ſo palpably evident, to refer him to *Exod.* xx. 16. "Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour." Both parties abhor what is here aſcribed to Calviniſm, and from the remark made at the cloſe of the preceding ſection, it appears, that the objection is irrelevant to the author's purpoſe.

But it unfortunately happens that the ſame apology, or any ſufficient one, can not be made on the other ſide. For as, according to Mr. F. every ſin is a poſitive thing, and "nothing happens independently on the ſupreme firſt cauſe, and on the providential laws which GOD has eſtabliſhed," it follows, that the conſequence which was falſely aſcribed to Calviniſm, is truly applicable to Arminianiſm; and that the *birth* of a child, which is the reſult of "the providential laws which GOD has eſtabliſhed," of every child, nay of every human action, the defect and obliquity thereof not excepted, is no leſs *fixed* than the day of judgment.

Not content with denying to GOD the right of appointing the *birth* of all children, ſince ſome of them are illegitimate, others vow celibacy, and ſome prevent, by careleſſneſs or cruelty, "the maturity of the fruit of the womb;" Mr. FLETCHER contends, by ſimilar arguments, that our *death* is not ſo at GOD's diſpoſal as to fix the period of it, at leaſt in general. His words are: "GOD does not ſo fabricate the link of our death, but we may *in general*, prolong our days by chooſing wiſdom, and ſhorten them by chooſing folly." * He then

* Ibid. p. 59.

quotes a number of paſſages from ſcripture to prove it; paſſages that ſpeak of *length of days* as the reward of wiſdom, and *long life* the effect of piety. This is but one inſtance out of a great number of this kind of argumentation, which is advanced by our author on every turn. By ſhewing therefore the inconcluſiveneſs of this argument, and therein of the principle on which it is built, the logical imbecility of all ſuch inſtances will appear. Obſerve then,

1. When it is ſaid, we may, in general, *prolong our days*, by chooſing wiſdom, what is the determinate meaning of the phraſe in the Arminian argument? Can it intend any thing more than, it is matter of *fact* as well as of *promiſe*, that godlineſs (*cæt. par.*) is connected with longevity? And if ſo, is it not one of the *laws* of heaven, and therefore an *appointed* prolongation?

2. If folly *ſhortens* our days, (*cæt. par.*) is not this alſo a *law* equitably *appointed?* In fact, the early death of the ſinner, as well as the late death of the righteous, is as much and unexceptionably ſubjected to *law* and *appointment* as the death of any other perſons in the world. To aſſert the contrary would be as deſtitute of truth as it would be to ſay, that the ſupreme Governor has but *one mode* of accompliſhing his purpoſes; or that there is but *one way* of living and dying among men.

3. If *every* birth and death is alike *prophetically certain*, that is, perfectly and infallibly known to GOD, ſo that, if he thought proper, he might declare it as an event *certainly* future, with all its moſt

moſt minute circumſtances—it follows, that *every* birth and death is *hypothetically neceſſary*. But let no one be ſo uncandid as to aſcribe to us, on this account, a *fatal*, *abſolute* neceſſity; which impious ſentiment we abhor no leſs than the objector. Beſide,

4. If *one*, by free will, may prolong or ſhorten life in a *great* degree, what adult is there that does not either prolong or ſhorten life in *ſome* degree? Conſequently, if Mr. F's principle be admitted, *every* life and death of an adult may be a deviation from the ſtandard of heaven. But what is that ſtandard? are they the laws of Providence? What are theſe laws of Providence? Do they not include the *minds* of men, as well as their bodies? Or are they barely the mechaniſm of matter and motion? If the latter, what a mutilated meagre notion of Providence! A Providence this, concerned in *matter* only to the excluſion of men's minds! It ſhould ſeem, then, that angels and devils are not the ſubjects of Providence!

But "it is the property of error to contradict itſelf." Mr. FLETCHER acknowledges, that "the birth and death of *all* mankind take place according to *ſome* providential laws."* Now, are there any providential laws which are not of *divine appointment?* And are not the more ſecret and minute wheels, the fartheſt removed from the graſp and ken of creatures, as well as the largeſt and moſt prominent, in the ſtupendous machine of Providence, equally *appointed?*

* Ibid. p. 61.

Mr. FLETCHER juſtly obſerves, that "GOD in a *peculiar* manner interpoſes in the *execution* or *ſuſpenſion* of theſe laws, with reſpect to the *birth* of ſome men," and, "he does the ſame with reſpect to the untimely *death* of ſome, and the wonderful *preſervation* of others." To make this account anſwer our objector's purpoſe, we muſt abſurdly imagine, that *particular* interpoſitions are no part of the *plan and purpoſe* of GOD reſpecting his creatures!

He ſtill objects: "To carry the doctrine of Providence ſo far as to make GOD *abſolutely* appoint the birth and death of all mankind with all their circumſtances, is to exculpate adulterers and murderers, and to charge GOD with being the principal contriver, and grand abettor, of all the atrocious crimes, and of all the filthy, bloody circumſtances, which have accompanied the birth and death of countleſs myriads of men."† Mr. F. ſeems to forget, "That nothing happens independently on the ſupreme firſt cauſe, and on the providential laws which GOD has eſtabliſhed."‡ Could theſe *atrocious crimes*, though their *atrocity* was not *cauſed* by GOD and his laws, have ever exiſted as *concrete acts, independently* on either?

It is once more urged: "Should Mr. T. anſwer, that — Although the generation and death of a child conceived in adultery, and cut off by murder, is *divinely and unchangeably fixed*; yet GOD is not at all the author of the adultery and murder, I deſire to know, how we can cut the gordian knot,

† Ut ſupra. ‡ Reply, p. 49.

knot, and divide between"‖ — the *crime* and the *act?* Mr. FLETCHER's requiſition is by no means a difficult taſk; it has been very often executed: nay, he himſelf, Alexander like, has done it. What he could not *untie* he arbitrarily *cut!* It is hoped, that the ſentiments maintained in this Eſſay, already explained, concerning the nature and origin of moral evil, contain a fair *ſolution* of the queſtion.

In ſhort, to ſuppoſe that there is *any action* or *event* in the world which has not *ſomething* good in it, and to make any thing beſide the *poſitive will* of GOD to be the *cauſe* of every thing *good* in the life, and death, and circumſtances of *every* perſon, is to charge Providence with endleſs and conſummate folly. In other words, it is to *overturn* the two goſpel *Axioms.*

From theſe premiſes we ſee the futility of Mr. F.'s inference: "If neither the *firſt* nor the *laſt* link of the chain of human life is, *in general*, fabricated by the *abſolute will* of GOD, it is unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the free-will of Deity alone fabricates the intermediate links." Why not, *ſo far as they are good?* And until *ſinleſs* perfection can be better proved to have preſent *actual exiſtence* in our world than it has yet been, we may well aſk, What acts of the *beſt* of men and women are free of ALL moral defect? The *difference* then of the divine cauſation and concurrence in the actions of the *beſt* and *worſt* of men, and, I may add, the actions of angels and devils, is this; the former are the effects of much ſovereign favour, the latter of much equitable

‖ Ibid. p. 62.

dereliction. The one has much of what it could not in equity claim; the other has much of what was its *due*, *viz.* being *left to itſelf* in the morality of its act.

§ 28. (4.) Another objection urged by Mr. FLETCHER againſt the Calviniſts is, that they *multiply* the decrees without cauſe. Biſhop HOPKINS had ſaid, that "not a duſt flies on a beaten road, but GOD raiſeth it, conducts its uncertain motion, and by his particular care conveys it to the particular place he had before appointed for it." To this repreſentation Mr. FLETCHER objects, "becauſe it abſurdly *multiplies* GOD's decrees—at this rate a large folio volume could not contain all the decrees of GOD concerning the leaſt particle of duſt."* It is not to be wondered at that one who denies GOD the apppointment of the births and the deaths of men, ſhould alſo plead exemption for their moral actions, from a notion, well meant indeed though unfounded, that it implies what is unworthy of the great ſupreme, his moral perfections and government. But it might puzzle a Jeſuitic hoſt to gueſs what good end can be anſwered by excluding a ſmall portion of matter from the influence of divine purpoſe. Is the divine mind ſubject to the ſame *inconvenience* with ours by a *multiplicity* of objects? Perhaps no one has confidence enough to affirm there are not as many *worlds* in the immenſity of ſpace as there are *words* in a thouſand volumes, or particles of flying duſt

* Reply to TOPLADY, p. 27.

duſt on our globe. Or if we reject the expanded ideas of aſtronomers reſpecting a plurality of worlds, muſt the *multiplicity* of the objects, and thence a tacit fear leſt they ſhould be any way diſtracting to the divine mind, or fatiguing to the divine power, be the reaſon of that rejection? Rather is it not one of the greateſt glories of Jehovah, that he perceives with *infinite eaſe* all poſſible worlds, and all poſſible multiplicities and varieties of ſuch worlds? And does not reaſon dictate, that he could with equal eaſe *decree* what he pleaſed of thoſe poſſibles? Conſequently with what eaſe could he perceive and decree all atoms and accidents in "this little dwelling place of worms."

Beſide, is not what the apoſtle ſays of *men*, applicable to every living creature, "In him we live and move?" And is it not equally true, that in him every particle of duſt, every ray of light, "has its being?" To ſuppoſe therefore that GOD decrees things *in general*, as Mr. FLETCHER often intimates, but not *in particular*, on account of the *multitude* of objects, and of accidents to which they are liable, is a ſort of compliment to the divine mind which is highly affronting, as if he were "altogether ſuch a one as ourſelves," or at moſt an augmentation only of what is finite. Let any perſon who has juſt notions of an INFINITE MIND judge of the following queſtions for himſelf. Is it *more difficult* for GOD to create a thouſand worlds than one? To determine the movements of the ſolar ſyſtem than our little globe? To appoint the general laws of nature, than the execution of thoſe laws

laws in their *minutiæ?* To aſcertain the production, the progreſs, refractions, reflections, and abſorbtions of all the rays of light exiſting in the whole duration of time, than if *one only* were the object of his attention? If, indeed, we judge of divine perfections as *limited*, we anſwer in the affirmative, and ſay, that every additional object requires additional power, wiſdom, attention, &c. But if we judge of the great I AM in a manner worthy of himſelf, we ſhall ſay, that *all difficulty*, which does not imply a real contradiction, is infinitely removed from him. It cannot be more difficult, diſtracting, perplexing, or any way unworthy of GOD, to pay a minute individual attention to millions of millions of *animalculæ*, grains of ſand, or drops of water, and aſcertain every motion and accident relative to each, than it would be to make a ſingle monarch his only care.

§ 29. (5.) Mr. FLETCHER objects that we aſcribe *too abſolute* a dependence upon GOD to accountable beings. Mr. TOPLADY had objected to the Arminian notion of a *ſelf-determining power*, becauſe it implied a degree of *independence* unſuitable to a creature. To this Mr. F. returns ſuch an anſwer, containing ſuch a repreſentation of the dependence of a creature on GOD, as nothing but the deſperation of a cauſe would ſuggeſt. "Is a horſe independent on its maſter, becauſe it can *determine itſelf* to range or lie down in his paſture?—Is a captain *independent* on his general, becauſe he can *determine himſelf* to ſtand his ground, or to run away in

in an engagement?—Are ſubjects *independent* on their ſovereign, becauſe they can *determine themſelves* to break or keep the laws of the land?"* Does this notion of our dependence on our Maker, Preſerver, and Governor, bear any reſemblance or conſiſtency with the apoſtle's account of the ſame ſubject? "In GOD we (not the good only, but *all* promiſcuouſly, *we*) live, move and have our being." What are laws of nature without effectuoſity; or organized bodies and mind, without the immediate concurring energy of the firſt cauſe?

Yet Mr. FLETCHER allows, not only that "all free agents have received their life and free-agency from GOD," but alſo that they "are every moment *dependent* upon GOD, for the preſervation of their life and free-agency."† But the queſtion is, whether theſe free agents are independent on GOD *in their free-agency?* Whether any being in earth, or heaven, or hell, is independent on GOD in his *acts*, in any individual act? The affirmative, we ſay, is irreconcileable with all juſt views of creaturely dependence, or the eſſential difference between a creature and the Creator. What though Mr. F's horſe, captain, or ſubject, in the illuſtration above quoted, be *dependent*, in *ſome reſpects*, on the maſter, the general, and the ſovereign, are there not a thouſand reſpects in which they are independent on them? How can this, therefore, be applicable to GOD and the creature without danger of irreverent raſhneſs?

Unem-

* Reply to TOPLADY, p. 69, † Ibid. ut ſupra.

Unembarraſſed with the ſhackles of a *difficult cauſe*, Mr. F. had undertaken to ſerve, how different from the ſentiment now oppoſed is the tendency of the following language, which, in juſtice to the author's piety, deſerves notice in this place. "All our *life*, *light*, and *power*, are nothing but emanations from him who is the fountain of life, the ſun of righteouſneſs, the wiſdom and power of GOD, Jehovah our righteouſneſs. All that *gracious rewardableneſs* of the works of faith, all that *aptitude* of our ſprinkled obedience unto eternal life, all that *being worthy*, which he himſelf condeſcends to ſpeak of, *Rev.* iii. 4, and *Luke* xx. 35, ſpring not only *from his gracious appointment*, but from his overflowing merits.—*What have we*, great GOD, *that we have not received* from thy gracious hand? and ſhall we keep back part of thy inconteſtable property, and impiouſly wear thy robes of praiſe! Far be the ſpiritual ſacrilege from every pious breaſt!—In point of *ſtrict equivalence*, our beſt works of faith, our holieſt duties, cannot merit the leaſt reward. But, O may the humbling truth keep us forever in the duſt! in point of *ſtrict juſtice* our every bad work *properly* deſerves infernal torments.—Are our hearts ſoftened? It is through the influence of his preventing grace. Are our ſins blotted out? It is through the ſprinkling of his atoning blood. The very graces which the ſpirit *works in us*, and the fruits of holineſs which thoſe graces *produce* in our hearts and lives, are acceptable only for Chriſt's ſake.—All Chriſtian believers ſay, *Not we*, but the grace of GOD in Chriſt. So far as their

their *tempers* and *actions*, have been *good*, they cry out, *Thou* haſt wrought all our works in us—If ever we did one truly good work, the merit is not ours, but GOD's, who by his free grace *prevented*, *accompanied* and *followed* us in the performance. For it is *God*, who *of his good pleaſure worketh in us both to will and to do.* Phil. ii. 12. *Not I*, ſays the apoſtle, *but the grace of God in me.*"* This is language worthy of a chriſtian divine; what a pity it ſhould ever be contradicted.

§ 30. (6.) Mr. FLETCHER, like Dr. WHITBY, takes it for granted, from ſome unguarded expreſſions of Calviniſts, that if decretive *election* be true, decretive *reprobation* muſt be ſo too. This repreſentation of the caſe is induſtriouſly propagated by modern Arminians, which is an additional call for animadverſion upon it. Thus Mr. F. aſſerts: "Abſolute calvinian election *unavoidably drags after it* abſolute calvinian reprobation:—a black *reprobation* this, which *neceſſitates* all who are perſonally written in the book of death to ſin on and be damned."† This aſſertion is as unfounded in *truth*, as it is void of decent candour; and which we not only diſavow, but alſo *demonſtrate to be impoſſible*. *Abſolute election* implies a *poſitive appointment*, which we have proved before to be worthy of GOD and a glorious fact; but *reprobation*, in Mr. F's acceptation of the term, being an *appointment* of ſin as the

* FLETCHER's Diſcourſe on Salvation by the covenant of grace, in *Equal Check*, p. 44. &c.

† Anſwer to TOPLADY's Vindication of the decrees, p. 9. Note.

the mean, and of miſery as the end, has been alſo proved to be equally inconſiſtent with the nature of *ſin*, as a moral defect, of *God* as a being of infinite holineſs and juſtice, and of *man* as a free agent.

In reference to this ſubject Mr. FLETCHER makes a very curious propoſal: "If any Calviniſt in the world can prove that *upon the calvinian plan*, among the thouſands of Calvin's reprobates who are yet in their mother's womb, *one* of them can, any how, avoid final damnation, I ſolemnly engage myſelf before the public to get my checks burnt at *Charing Croſs* by the common hangman, on any day which Mr. HILL, Mr. TOPLADY, and Mr. M'GOWAN will pleaſe to appoint."* This paſſage, in one view of it, is worded in ſo cautious a manner, that *now* it is become impoſſible for the boys at *Charing Croſs* to have a bonfire of the checks; but in another view, had the parties concerned claimed the diverting engagement, they might; for the requiſition was not ſo hard a taſk as he thought, except he meant to inſult his readers by requiring contradictions.

Mr. FLETCHER himſelf would allow that *eventually*, or *in fact*, ſuch and ſuch *individuals* of the human race will be in heaven and in hell. Now "on the calvinian plan" the *reprobates* are the latter; and their miſery is *of themſelves* ſo entirely as if there were neither decree nor even fore-knowledge in GOD. What more could Mr. F. ſay or wiſh on the ſubject? This cannot be ſaid of the *others*,

* Ibid. p. 11.

others, for their happineſs, being a real good, is of *God*. But ſhould any one ſay, What Mr. F. required was an acknowledgement that one of thoſe who, in *fact*, will be miſerable, *might* have been "by ſome means" brought in fact to heaven. If the meaning be, that the reprobates, as the objector calls them, ſhould have ſuitable and ſufficient *means* to avoid miſery; or *can*, notwithſtanding any ſuppoſed decree of reprobation to the contrary, which is all in reaſon that can be required to conſtitute obligation in moral agents; I heſitate not to ſay, The propoſal is accepted, a Calviniſt can prove, and has proved in this volume, what Mr. F. required, and to which he annexed his extraordinary engagement.—But now, reader, out of the four perſons concerned in the propoſal, including the author of the Checks to Antinomianiſm, three are gone to heaven, where they are better employed than in mutual recriminations and jarrings by the way thither.

Mr. TOPLADY had argued, "If it can be proved that GOD *owes* ſalvation to every rational being he has made; *then*, and then only, will it follow, that GOD is *unjuſt* in not paying his debt of ſalvation to each.—What ſhadow of injuſtice can be faſtened on his conduct for, in ſome caſes, withholding what he does not owe?"* How does Mr. F. anſwer it? Why, by granting to the preſent writer all he wiſhes in order to eſtabliſh the Equity of Divine Government, and the Sovereignty of Divine Grace. "The

* TOPLADY's More Work for Mr. JOHN WESLEY, p. 35, 36.

"The flaw of it," ſays Mr. F. "conſiſts in ſuppoſing, that there can be no MEDIUM between *denying* eternal ſalvation, and *appointing* to eternal damnation; and that, becauſe GOD may *abſolutely elect* as many of his creatures as he pleaſes to a crown of glory, he may *abſolutely reprobate* as many as Calviniſm pleaſes to eternal ſin and everlaſting burnings."* Here Mr. F. ſuppoſes a *medium* between *denying* ſalvation, and poſitively *reprobating*; but at the ſame time that *Calviniſm* knows no ſuch medium. In the preſent attempt, however, a Calviniſt not only acknowledges the exiſtence of ſuch a medium, but has undertaken to point out, and from firſt principles to eſtabliſh, the indiſpenſable neceſſity of it in the true ſyſtem of Theology; but which Mr. F. neither did, nor, on his own principles, could do.

But after acknowledging the neceſſity and exiſtence of ſuch a *medium*, what can Mr. FLETCHER mean by ſuch repreſentations as the following? "It is a common *ſtratagem* of the Calviniſts to ſay, Election depends upon GOD's love only, but *damnation* depends upon our ſin only. Break the thin ſhell of this ſophiſm, and you will find this bitter kernel; GOD's diſtinguiſhing love elects ſome to unavoidable holineſs and finiſhed ſalvation; and his diſtinguiſhing wrath reprobates all the reſt of mankind to remedileſs ſin and eternal damnation."† It is natural to aſk, whether Mr. F. would have a calviniſt ſay, who as cordially abhors what is here palmed

* Anſwer to TOPLADY's Vindication of the Decrees, p. 33.
† Ibid. p. 11.

palmed upon him as he himſelf ever did? He could wiſh him to ſay, "The *ſole cauſe* of the *Reprobation* which ends in unavoidable damnation is only ſin." For one, this I can moſt cordially ſay, as what appears to me a ſacred truth, but without giving up Calviniſm, becauſe *it does not* "ſtand or fall with *abſolute* reprobation," notwithſtanding Mr. F.'s repeated aſſertions to the contrary. When oppoſing the doctrine of *abſolute* election to eternal life, he adds: "An election this, which, *in the very nature of things*, drags after it an *abſolute* reprobation to eternal death, through remedileſs ſin." Surely, when the author of the above paragraph penned it, he muſt have had a very confined notion of the "nature of things."

§ 31. The Rev. R. HILL had ſaid, in his "Friendly Remarks," that "Salvation wholly depends upon the purpoſe of GOD according to election, without any reſpect to what may be in the elect." In open defiance to his own ſuppoſed *medium*, as well as of ſacred truth, Mr. F. thus replies: "Now, Sir, as by the doctrine of *undeniable conſequences*, he who receives a guinea with the *king's head* on the one ſide, cannot but receive the *lions* on the other ſide; ſo he that admits the preceding propoſition, *cannot but admit* the *inſeparable counterpart*, namely, the following poſition, which every attentive and unprejudiced perſon ſees written in blood upon that ſide of CALVIN'S ſtandard which is generally kept out of ſight, "Damnation wholly depends upon the purpoſe of GOD

according to reprobation, without reſpect to what may be in the reprobates."† A ſingle remark ſufficiently expoſes this fanciful conſequence. As there *is not* in fact, any meritorious good, or even *diſtinguiſhed excellence* of any kind, in the finally happy, but what was *gratuitouſly* received, their ſalvation muſt *wholly* depend on the purpoſe and choice of GOD; which Mr. F. himſelf has often acknowledged in a manner more or leſs explicit: But, on the reverſe, as there *is* in fact, a *ſufficient demerit* in the finally miſerable, without any purpoſe, will, or agency of GOD whatever, their damnation is of *themſelves alone*, totally irreſpective of all reprobation.

In various ways, and by unwearied efforts, Mr. F. has endeavoured to faſten this horrible conſequence upon Calviniſm. "The queſtion is not," he remarks, "whether God can juſtly limitate the *happineſs* of man, or the number of the men whom he will raiſe to ſuch and ſuch heights. This we never diſputed." Wherein then does this differ from true Calviniſm? In nothing. Mr. F. having obſerved ſome unguarded expreſſions in Mr. TOPLADY and ſome others, called them *Calviniſm*, and inferred from thence, that all Calviniſts hold, what in fact they abhor, namely, that GOD "may alſo *without injuſtice abſolutely reprobate* as many of his unborn creatures as he pleaſes, and *decree* to protract their infernal torment to all eternity, after having firſt *decreed* their neceſſary fall into ſin, and their neceſſary continuance in ſin, as neceſſary means

† Logica Genevenſis, p. 144, 145.

means in order to their neceſſary end, which is eternal damnation."* After ſuch a monſtrous exhibition as this, who can wonder that Mr. F.'s partial admirers ſhould be frightened at the very name of a Calviniſt, and view him as a deluded Manichean!

What could we think of a man who ſhould detain two perſons of the *ſame name*, one guilty and the other innocent; then clothe both *alike* with bear-ſkins, and endanger their being alike worried? By the name Calviniſm, notwithſtanding the pleas, the arguments, the proteſtations of numbers to the contrary, Mr. F. often intends every thing abominable and horrible, ſomething worſe and more frightful than Manicheiſm. Is this controverſial fairneſs? Is it Chriſtian candour? However, let us call in charity's lovely aid, and impute the exceptionable touches not to deſign, but to prejudice or inattention.

Mr. TOPLADY had raſhly ſaid, "The predeſtination of ſome to life, aſſerted in the *ſeventeenth article*, cannot be maintained without admitting the reprobation of ſome others to death—and all who have ſubſcribed to the ſaid article, are bound in honour, conſcience and law, to defend reprobation, were it only to keep the ſeventeenth article "*upon its legs.*" *If* Mr. T. meant by "reprobation" a *poſitive appointment* to ſin and wrath; I repeat the term uſed before, it was *raſhly* aſſerted. For the doctrine of the ſeventeenth article, which, in the plain unſophiſticated ſenſe of it, expreſſes genuine Calviniſm,

* Anſwer to TOPLADY's Vindication, p. 34.

viniſm, is a column of burniſhed gold, placed on an eternal rock, and needs not a leg of human artifice to ſupport it.

§ 32. It is truly ſhocking to obſerve in what an unqualified manner Mr. F. attributes the moſt horrid ſentiments to Calviniſm. Mr. TOPLADY had ſaid, with great truth, "If GOD be not obliged, in juſtice, to ſave mankind, then neither is he unjuſt in *paſſing by* ſome men;" on which our author exclaims: "If by *paſſing* ſome men by, this gentleman means, as CALVINISM DOES, abſolutely *predeſtinating* ſome men to neceſſary, *remedileſs ſin*, and unavoidable eternal damnation; we deny that GOD might *juſtly* have paſſed by the whole of mankind:—we deny that he might juſtly have paſſed by *one* ſingle man, woman or child. —Nay, we affirm, that, if we conceive Satan, or the evil principle of *Manes*, as exerting creative power, we could not conceive him worſe employed, than in forming an *abſolute* reprobate in embryo: that is, a creature unconditionally and abſolutely doomed to remedileſs wickedneſs, and everlaſting fire." † And ſo does the writer of theſe pages; but ſhould ſo monſtrous a *ſuppoſition* be laid to the account of Calviniſm? Nay, rather, why ſhould ſo daring an *aſſertion* be made reſpecting what Calviniſm *does mean* by the phraſe "*paſſing by*"? Is it to be wondered at, that an admirer of Mr. F.'s controverſial talents, who has not ſtrength of mind to diſtinguiſh, or candidneſs of temper to acknowledge a difference between

† Ibid. p. 40.

between what is eſſential to Calviniſm and what is here imputed to it, ſhould draw the inference, that *all* Calviniſm has in it ſomething ſupremely *ſatanic* and *Manichean?* Nay, if the reader were conſcious of any efforts of candour in his heart, they are inſtantly ſuppreſſed: "The ſimple are frequently impoſed upon by an artificial ſubſtituting of the *harmleſs* word "*paſſing by*" for the *terrible* word *abſolutely reprobating* to death."‡ So then, whenever a Calviniſt uſes the "harmleſs" word he is guilty of "artifice;" he not only *may ſometimes* mean what is "terrible" by it, but, this *being* [no doubt by *neceſſity*] the acceptation of the phraſe in the calvinian ſenſe, he *muſt* be ſo underſtood. The preſent writer, however, and a great majority, if not all the Calviniſts, will, he preſumes, therein juſtify him, denies the charge, and abhors the imputation.

CALVIN, it is true, in the warmth of his oppoſition to Popery, ſaid ſome things on the ſubject, which, if we interpret them without either charity to the perſon or candour to his cauſe, according to the moſt exceptionable and harſh acceptation of terms employed, ought to be rejected. But, that amiable grace charity, which hopeth the beſt of all men profeſſing godlineſs, might ſay much in exculpation of him. When for inſtance, he ſays; "Itaque prout in alterutrum finem *quiſque* conditus eſt, ita vel ad vitam vel ad mortem *prædeſtinatum* dicimus." This, if taken in the worſt ſenſe, might be dreſſed up, as Mr. F. does the whole body of Calviniſm, in the moſt frightful colours; but

‡ *Ut ſupra.*

but candour will wait for Calvin's own explanation of his meaning: "Hanc vero Deus non modo in ſingulis perſonis teſtatus eſt, ſed *ſpecimen ejus* in tota Abrahæ ſobole edidit.—Ante omnium oculos eſt *ſegregatio:* in Abrahæ perſona, quaſi in arido trunco, populus unus, *aliis rejectis*, peculiariter eligitur."† After all the attention to the ſubject in my power, as contained in CALVIN's works, what he here expreſſes I take to be the *real doctrine* of that illuſtrious writer, ſtripped of obnoxious incidental expreſſions, and interpreted by Chriſtian charity.

Nay, ſuppoſe the terms employed by CALVIN, TOPLADY, or any other, were taken in the worſt ſenſe that an Arminian chooſes to put upon them, the *ſource* of the miſtake, or obſcurity, would be the *very ſame* as that of Mr. F.'s intemperate zeal againſt his opponents, viz. That predeſtination to LIFE *muſt needs imply* predeſtination to DEATH, "as he who takes the *king's head* muſt alſo take the *lion's.*" Take away this falſe principle, and CALVIN's *predeſtination*, "ad vitam vel ad mortem" is the moſt innocent and amiable thing in the world. Nor let any one abſurdly urge, that the good man took *pleaſure* in the thought of human *miſery* for its *own* ſake. To be ſatisfied of the falſity of the principle itſelf, whether held by CALVIN, FLETCHER, or any other, we ſhould ever keep in mind the *abſolute impoſſibility* of SIN being, in any reſpect, *decretively neceſſitated*, as before ſhewn, without involving the moſt abſurd contradictions, while

† CALV. Inſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 21.

while *holineſs muſt*, in *every* reſpect and degree, be poſitively, voluntarily, and therefore decretively cauſed. Whoever *conſiſtently* holds, that all good is from GOD, and all evil from ourſelves, which is the eſſence of all religion and morality, muſt alſo diſcard the illegitimate inference, the ideal fiction, that ſin is poſitively ordained.

§ 33. (7.) It is again objected by Mr. FLETCHER that the Calviniſts repreſent God as *permitting* ſin. In nothing does our author ſeem more at a loſs than in attempting to anſwer the following queſtion: "How came moral evil to be *permitted*, when it might as eaſily have been *hindered*, by a Being of infinite goodneſs, power and wiſdom?" In this queſtion, the term "permitted" ſtands evidently oppoſed to "hindered," and is therefore the ſame as *not hindered*. But how does Mr. F. anſwer the queſtion? By a childiſh *pun*: that GOD, "far from *permitting* man to ſin, ſtrictly *forbad* him to do it!" And by a ruinous *illuſtration*, taken from a general and his ſoldiers: "A general wants to try the faithfulneſs of his ſoldiers, that he may reward thoſe who *will* fight, and puniſh thoſe who *will* go over to the enemy.—By his omniſcience he ſees that ſome WILL deſert: by his omnipotence he *would* indeed hinder them from doing it—but his infinite wiſdom does not permit him to do it." And by an illiberal *inference*: "By ſuch dangerous inſinuations as that, which this illuſtration expoſes, the ſimple are imperceptibly led to confound *Chriſt* and *Belial*; and to think, that there is *little difference* between the celeſtial parent of *good*, and the Manichean parent of *good* and

evil; the *Janus* of the fataliſts, who wears two faces, an angel's face and a devil's face; a mongrel imaginary GOD this, whoſe fancied ways are, like his fancied nature, full of *duplicity*." *

Now, paſſing by the pun and the inference, to notice the illuſtration; the reader ſhould be reminded, that on Mr. F.'s principle that repreſents ſin as the offspring of a poſitive cauſe, i. e. *free will* which alſo is the offspring of the *divine will*, here is not only the *not hindering* of ſin, but a poſitive divine cauſation aſcribed to it, the very thing the objection profeſſes to avoid. Beſides, Mr. F.'s illuſtration is as imperfect, in another reſpect, as the ſyſtem he defends. Man's *dependence* upon GOD is of a nature *eſſentially* different from that of ſoldiers on their general. In GOD all his creatures *live* and *move*; and without his will and concurrence no act could poſſibly take place. Omniſcience ſees man *will ſin*; the will is given by the creator and governor to man, and the divine *concurrence* is added to his volition. So that by this illuſtration Mr. F. refers the *origin of evil* to the *will of God* as much as the groſſeſt fataliſm can do.

To his illuſtration, Mr. FLETCHER adds an *argument*, tending to prove, "that *this* world was the moſt perfect which GOD *could* create, to diſplay his infinite power, and manifold wiſdom." † At length we are brought, it ſhould ſeem, to a concluſion which is not a little humbling to the cavils of Arminianiſm: GOD *could not hinder* ſin, but by ſuppreſſing, or not ſufficiently diſplaying, his infinite

* Ibid. p. 45. † *Ut ſupra.*

finite power and manifold wiſdom. The unavoidable concluſion is, on Mr. F.'s principle reſpecting the nature and cauſation of ſin, that GOD is *poſitively* the willer of the exiſtence of this monſter, in order "to diſplay his infinite power, and manifold wiſdom!" A ſentiment this, and which, I appeal to every candid and intelligent reader, is fairly drawn from Mr. F.'s premiſes, utterly unworthy of the divine *equity* and *rectitude*.

§ 34. (8.) We are again told, that to neceſſitate free agents is to *deſtroy their nature*. Thus Mr. FLETCHER interrogates and replies: "But *could* not GOD NECESSITATE FREE AGENTS to keep the law they are under? Yes, ſays Calviniſm—but ſcripture, good ſenſe, and matter of fact, ſay No."* This, it muſt be acknowledged, is a bold aſſertion; and, it ſhould ſeem, more bold than true. It is contrary to ſcripture, to reaſon, and common ſenſe, to ſuppoſe that the ſpirits of juſt men made *perfect* loſe their *free* agency. And yet, who does not admit that they are *neceſſitated* to keep the law they are under. On this paſſage, I would remark:

1. Mr. FLETCHER has expreſsly acknowledged a *neceſſity of conſequence*, and *prophetic certainty*. Now if ſuch neceſſity be allowable in any caſe, it muſt be be in the *influencing* of rational beings in ſuch a manner as that their preſent holineſs and conſequent happineſs may be truly predicated of as certainly future.

2. We acknowledge, that abſolute decretive neceſſity to ſin is incompatible with free agency and accountableneſs;

* *Ut ſupra.*

accountableneſs; but not ſo the neceſſity for which we plead, as appears from the following conſiderations.

God ſees to the end of *all* events, as *facts* truly and certainly future; this is granted. Every event muſt have *ſome* cauſe of its exiſtence; which every rational mind muſt admit. No *ſinful* event, as ſuch, can have a poſitive cauſe reducible to the *will* of the firſt cauſe: which our preſent opponents (though not very conſiſtently) will ſubſcribe to; otherwiſe, the boundaries between *moral* and *natural* evil are deſtroyed. And, indeed, by the bye, this ſhocking confuſion ſome of the anti-calviniſtic neceſſitarians have openly avowed: As if ſin were not an *oppoſition* to the divine *will* and *nature*, but *merely* the parent of *pain* to the ſubject himſelf; which ſentiment will be noticed in the ſequel. However, as every event muſt have ſome cauſe, ſo of courſe every *good act*; if this cauſe be in *ourſelves*, radically conſidered, then *all* good is not *from God*, which is contrary to an acknowledged AXIOM. But if all good be from God ultimately, in ſuch a manner that by *ſuppreſſing* his creating act, the good act of the free agent could have no future exiſtence; but on the contrary, by his creating and providential acts they could be certainly future; which reſts on incontrovertible fact; it irrefragably follows, that a free agent is *neceſſitated* to act, in our ſenſe of the term, and conſequently that NECESSITY AND FREE AGENCY ARE NOT INCONSISTENT.

Again; When Mr. Fletcher objects, "It would be as abſurd to create *free agents* in order to

to *neceſſitate* them, as to *do* a thing in order to *undo* it," he confounds two things that are in themſelves extremely different, viz. *Abſolute* neceſſitation with that which is only *hypothetical*, which our author has openly admitted. And indeed what can be more reaſonable than the ſuppoſition, that GOD has a right, decretively and operatively, to lay down *holy premiſes*, though he foreſees that from theſe the creature will *certainly* draw a practical *ſinful inference?* But if ſo, has he not a right, in like manner, to lay down ſuch premiſes, from which he foreſees the creature will *certainly* draw a practical *holy inference?* Now *all certainty* muſt have *ſome* cauſe; ſuch cauſe muſt be either in GOD or in the creature; to ſay that the *certainty* of drawing the practical *ſinful* inference originates in GOD, is to make him the *certain cauſe* of ſin; which we alike reject: and rather ſay, this cauſe is in *ourſelves*, that is, our eſſential defectibility as creatures dealt with in mere equity. To deſtroy this *defectibility* is as impoſſible as it is to deſtroy the *difference* between Creator and creature, which is the real baſis of it. Here then, the creature, *left to itſelf*, uninfluenced by ſovereign undeſerved interpoſition, is an adequate and certain cauſe of drawing the practical ſinful inference, or of *moral defect*, without any *poſitive will*, whatever, on the part of GOD, as the cauſe of its exiſtence.—But if ſo—that man left to himſelf in equity, is an adequate *certain* cauſe of defect—it muſt follow, that if rational free creatures keep *at all* the law they are under, they muſt be *graciouſly neceſſitated* to it, that is, by an hypothetical, not an abſolute neceſſity: A neceſſity, I would add, which has the *diſ-*

poſition

poſition for its object, not the *will*; and yet from which the will *certainly* chooſes *good*, in proportion as it is aſſimilated to the moral character of deity. In a word, there can be no obedience predicated of as *certainly* future, without an hypothetically *neceſſary cauſation* on the part of GOD.

§ 35. Mr. FLETCHER, in the following quotation, ſpeaks good ſenſe and ſound divinity: "GOD's *diſtributive juſtice* could never be diſplayed, nor could free obedience be paid by rationals, and crowned by the rewarder and judge of all the earth, unleſs rationals were FREE-*willing* creatures." But is it not wonderful that he ſhould *deny* free agency to devils, and alſo *limit* the free agency of GOD? Of the bleſſed GOD he ſays: "He does not exerciſe his liberty, in chooſing moral good or evil." On the other hand, of Satan, he ſays: "His liberty of choice is not exerciſed about moral good or evil."‡ Surely nothing but a deſperate effort to uphold a falling cauſe could dictate ſuch aſſertions; aſſertions theſe, diametrically oppoſite to theological and philoſophical axioms. For,

1. The choice of good, in preference to evil, is not *praiſe-worthy* except it be *free*. But GOD's choice of good in preference to evil is praiſe-worthy, therefore it is free.

2. The will that does not chooſe good, in *preference* to evil, is not a good will. But the will of GOD is good, therefore it is a will of preference.

The truth is, GOD's will is *free* by *hypothetical* neceſſity only; and not by that abſolute neceſſity for

‡ Scripture Scales, Part the Second, p. 279, 280.

for which Mr. F. pleads. To ſay with him that the divine will is *abſolutely* neceſſitated to *any thing*, is abſurd; and as much more injurious to truth than the ſuppoſition of a creature being ſo neceſſitated, as GOD is ſuperior to creatures. Of all *fataliſms* this is the moſt abſurd. Hypothetical neceſſity, which Calviniſts maintain, affords as firm and certain a concluſion as any premiſes afford a certain inference. Inſtead, therefore, of exalting *Fate* to a ſuperior throne, binding the will of the ſupreme, we ſay: GOD is a being of *infinite*, invariable goodneſs, wiſdom, rectitude, &c. THEREFORE he always chooſes good rather than its oppoſite with *infinite certainty*.

On the SAME infallible principles we alſo demonſtrate the conſiſtence of HUMAN freedom with hypothetical neceſſity. On the one hand, IF he is a moral agent, he is *free* from *abſolute* neceſſity: IF his diſpoſition be wiſe, good, upright, &c. we may *infer* his choice of good, rather than evil, in the ſame proportion. On the other hand, IF his diſpoſition be fooliſh, wicked, depraved, &c. an evil choice may be *proportionably inferred*. Now it is worthy of GOD, *without infringing the liberty* of the ſubject, to influence and ameliorate the *diſpoſition*, from whence, in the ſame proportion, may be inferred the *certainty* of a good choice. This is the only neceſſity of good actions for which we plead.

And indeed Mr. FLETCHER, in his more conciliating moments, ſeems to allow ſo much: "We never ſuppoſed," he ſays, "that the natural will of fallen man is free *to good*, before it is more or leſs

leſs touched or rectified by grace.—We always maintained that the liberty of our will is highly conſiſtent with divine grace, by which it is put in a capacity of chooſing life.—Nor is this freedom derogatory to free grace; for, as it was free grace that gave an upright free will to Adam at his creation; ſo, whenever his fallen children *think or act aright*, it is becauſe their free will is mercifully prevented, touched, and ſo far rectified by grace.—All agree to aſcribe to the free grace of the Redeemer ALL the freedom of man's will to GOOD.—We give GOD in Chriſt *all* the glory of our ſalvation, and we take care not to give him—*any* of the ſhame of our damnation.—At the Synod of *Dort*, the Arminians were ſenſible that a *gratuitous election* can be defended by ſcripture and reaſon.—We grant, that although GOD as a Judge is no reſpecter of perſons; yet, as a BENEFACTOR, he is, and of courſe has a right to be, ſo far a *reſpecter of perſons*, as to beſtow his *favours* in various degrees upon his creatures; dealing them to ſome with a *more ſparing* hand than he does to others.—We grant, that none of *theſe peculiar elect* ſhall ever periſh, though they would have periſhed had they not been faithful unto death; and we allow that, with reſpect to GOD's foreknowledge and omniſcience, their number is *certain*.—It is indubitable, that GOD, as a ſovereign Benefactor may, without ſhadow of injuſtice, diſpenſe his favours, ſpiritual and temporal, as he pleaſes.—According to all our doctrines of grace, perſons who are in glory like Peter, are infinitely more indebted to Chriſt's grace,

grace than perſons who lift up their eyes in torments like Judas.—Now this election in which Judas has no intereſt, ſprings from GOD's *free grace*, as well as from *voluntary perſeverance* in the free obedience of faith.—Therefore Peter, and all the ſaints in glory, are indebted to Chriſt, not only for their rewards of additional grace upon earth, but alſo for *all* their *eternal* ſalvation, and for *all* the heavenly bleſſings which flow from their *particular* redemption."*

If it be aſked, wherein does Mr. FLETCHER's ſyſtem differ from the Calviniſtic one? The true anſwer is, *In one ſingle point*—SELF-CONSISTENCY. Let Arminians holding the ſentiments now quoted only be conſiſtent with themſelves, and we aſk no more. If what is now offered to the public ſhould prove inſtrumental in effecting ſo deſirable a purpoſe, one principal deſign of the publication will be anſwered.

§36. To conclude: Though I have examined Mr. FLETCHER's principles with a freedom due to the importance of truth, the reader is again reminded that I regard his perſonal character, and the tendency of his *practical* writings very highly; eſpecially his Portrait of St. Paul † and Poſthumous Letters. He was a man of prayer, mortified to the world, heavenly minded, ſteady and indefatigable in his exertions

* Fourth check, p. 218, 219, 236. Fictitious and Genuine Creed, pref. 6, 7, 10, 11. p. 16, 18.

† A ſecond edition of this work has been publiſhed in 2 vols. 8vo. and ſold by Longman, in London.

tions to ſave ſouls from death, and direct them to "Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified," and lead them in the way of holineſs and peace. When therefore I view the *character* of Mr. FLETCHER, it is with no ſmall regret that I find it requiſite to animadvert on his *controverſial writings*, and to obſerve his prejudices running ſo high againſt—*Calviniſm*, ſhall I ſay? Nay, rather, againſt a *man of ſtraw* to which he gives that name.

And even in his oppoſition to what he calls Calviniſm, I can give him full credit that his *deſign* was praiſe-worthy—to vindicate the divine character, maintain the reign of holineſs in the church, and ſpread truth in the world. In this *deſign* I have the pleaſurable conſciouſneſs of concurring; but how far the ſyſtem he defended, compared with what is here propoſed, is calculated to promote the propoſed deſign, is now left for public deciſion.

SECT. V.

SECT. V.

The ſovereignty of ſubjective grace in transforming the mind to the divine likeneſs.

§ 1. *Difference ariſing from a want of preciſe views of the nature of* GRACE. § 2—4. (I.) *Which denotes, according to ſcripture, ſometimes an* exhibition *of divine favour.* § 5, 6. (II.) *Sometimes the* required effect *of exhibited favour. And* § 7. (III.) *Sometimes the* holy ſtate of the mind. § 8. *This produced by an internal operation of the Holy Spirit, and may be termed* ſubjective grace. § 9. *Theſe views of grace compared.* § 10. *Since the firſt conſtitutes but a part of the agent's motive,* § 11. *And the ſecond is not the mere effect of the firſt,* § 12. *Hence the neceſſity of the third in all virtuous and holy acts. Further proved,* § 13. (1.) *From* ſcripture. § 14—16. (2.) *From* reaſon. § 17—23. (3.) *From* analogy. § 24—28. *The* nature *of ſubjective grace more particularly aſcertained.*

§ 1. MANY controverſial differences have ſubſiſted, and now ſubſiſt, not only between Calviniſts and Arminians, but among ſeveral other denominations of Chriſtians, (ſome of which are making conſiderable efforts, in the preſent day, for the propagation of their ſentiments), occaſioned,

I preſume, by the want of preciſe views of the nature of GRACE. The import of the term, in general, is ſufficiently plain, as denoting *divine favour*: but the difficulty, from which ariſes a difference of opinion, conſiſts in this — that ſuch favour is repreſented in the ſacred oracles under ſeveral *aſpects*, according to different relations and circumſtances.

§ 2. (I.) Sometimes divine favour, in the way of *exhibition*, addreſſed to the intellect and will of the moral agent, is termed *grace*. Thus the *manifeſtation* of covenant favours, as the love of GOD to a periſhing world in general, and in a higher degree to his people in particular, the pardon of ſin, the gift of righteouſneſs, ſalvation from moral evil and from hell, with everlaſting life and glory, obtains that name. *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation hath appeared unto all men*; that is, the *goſpel*, which is a diſplay of *divine favour*, is preached to all nations and people. When the apoſtle Peter ſays (1 Pet. v. 12.) "This is the true grace of GOD wherein ye ſtand," he evidently means the goſpel, in which is made a glorious exhibition of divine favour. "The word of his grace" is a periphraſis for "the goſpel," and often occurs in the New Teſtament; in which the word "grace" muſt intend the divine favour in its *exhibited* form. When St. Paul ſays, "Ye are fallen from grace," (on ſuppoſition that the perſons he addreſſed ſought to be juſtified by the law) he can mean only that they had fallen or apoſtatized

apoſtatized from the true goſpel,—that they had loſt a juſt view of GOD's manifeſted favour to ſinful men as the ground of their faith, and hope of ſalvation. When St. Peter obſerves, (1 Pet. i. 10.) that ſome "propheſied of the grace that ſhould come unto" the perſons whom he addreſſed; he afterwards (ver. 12.) explains his meaning thus,—"they did miniſter (or inſtrumentally exhibit) the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the goſpel unto you." The apoſtle Jude ſpeaks of ſome "ungodly men, turning the grace of our GOD into laſciviouſneſs." The very terms uſed in the connection prove that nothing elſe can be meant than the exhibition or manifeſtation of covenant favour addreſſed to free agents, who perverſely abuſed it. Being "ungodly" men, they were *graceleſs*, in the ſubjective ſenſe of the word; and yet they *abuſed* "grace," which neceſſarily implies that it was ſomething objective. It would be eaſy to produce other paſſages which are equally deciſive in proof of this acceptation of the term "grace," but theſe, I preſume, are ſufficient.

§ 3. In order more clearly to prepare the way for the reſult intended, it is obſervable that the whole of divine revelation may be conſidered either as a *teſtimony*, or as a *proclamation* addreſſed to mankind by the King of heaven.

1. The whole of divine revelation, however diverſified, may be conſidered as a *teſtimony* from GOD to man. It teſtifies concerning *God*; his

nature, his perfections, his works, purpoſes, and diſpenſations. It teſtifies concerning *man*; his nature, his dependence, his obligations, his apoſtacy, his actions — good and bad, and their conſequences. It teſtifies concerning the world and the church, the preſent and the future ſtate of exiſtence, bleſſings and wrath, life and death, heaven and hell.

Now every thing thus teſtified is addreſſed, immediately, to the *underſtanding and judgment*, but ultimately to the *will*; requiring *approbation* of what it teſtifies to be true and good, and *diſapprobation* of what it teſtifies to be falſe and evil. I ſaid the addreſs is *ultimately* to the *will* of man; to his underſtanding only as the *medium*, or the way to the *heart*, (a word often uſed in ſcripture as ſynonymous with *will*) which is the ſeat of choice and freedom, and not to the *ſtate* of the mind, whether good or bad, tho' this has an important influence on the determination of the will.

2. The whole of the ſacred ſcriptures may be conſidered as a *proclamation* of the ſupreme King addreſſed to men. They proclaim *divine favours* and *equitable requirements*.

They proclaim *divine favours*. They not only teſtify that man is in an apoſtate and ruined ſtate, but iſſue a proclamation of love, grace, and mercy. The ſovereign of the univerſe, regarding the human race in a periſhing condition, announces forgiveneſs, righteouſneſs, grace, life, comfort, ſtrength, in one word SALVATION. Such favours are implied in all the *promiſes* made to the church and

and each believer; in all the *predictions* concerning the Meſſiah and his kingdom; in all the *invitations* to partake of the good exhibited; and in all the *preparations* made for the uſe of thoſe who are invited. It is obvious that theſe proclamations of divine favours, provided and about to be conferred, are addreſſed ultimately to the *will*, as well as the "teſtimonies" before mentioned. They do indeed convey great inſtruction; but all inſtruction is intended to reach the heart and affections, and to afford the will ſuitable means and inducements for comfort and obedience.

Again, the ſacred ſcriptures proclaim *equitable requirements*. All *laws*, whether moral or poſitive; all *ſanctions*, whether rewards or puniſhments; all *invitations*, *threatenings*, and *expoſtulations*; however diverſified, and by whatever inſtruments or means conveyed, imply a requiſition of *obedience*. They require the obedience either of faith, of love, of fear, of worſhip, or of ſervice. Now, it is plain, though the intellectual powers are firſt and immediately addreſſed, the will and affections are ultimately aimed at in all theſe proclamations, both of favours and requirements. A bare conſideration or contemplation of them is only a part of the implied obligation; and then alone is the great end of them profitable to man as the accountable agent, when the active powers, the will and the affections, are ſuitably influenced to practice.

§ 4. In whatever light we view the holy ſcriptures,

tures, however analyſed, however claſſed, the whole and each part of the Old and New Teſtament muſt be of the nature of *moral means*, in ſome form, or in ſome reſpects, addreſſed to the *will* of the agent, in order to aſſiſt him in making his elections. Every addreſs, of whatever kind, ſuppoſes that he is free in his choice, without conſtraint. Every teſtimony and every proclamation of divine *favour* is in fact revealed, or *objective, grace*; and is juſtly intitled *goſpel*, as glad tidings to ſinners. Sovereign favour lays the foundation; but equitable government demands compliance, and requires the moral agent to build upon it for eternity. Objective, exhibited grace may be abuſed; the divine teſtimony diſregarded or diſbelieved; the heavenly proclamation undervalued and ſlighted. To the prepared feaſt many, tho' invited, may not come: to the divine phyſician many, tho' diſeaſed, may not apply. — Theſe views of grace, well conſidered, will aſſiſt us in forming conſiſtent thoughts reſpecting other acceptations of the term, or other important truths expreſſed by it.

§ 5. (II.) Another acceptation of the word "grace," as uſed by the inſpired writers, is the *effect* produced by exhibited favour, as before explained, in the minds of real converts. Thus they repreſent *liberality*,* — "See that ye abound in this *grace* alſo;" evidently intending the exerciſe of a generous and liberal temper in relieving the neceſſities of

* See 2 Cor. ix. 15. viii. 7.

of the indigent. And thus the *Chriſtian temper* is repreſented by St. Peter, (2 Pet. iii. 18.) "But grow in *grace*, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt." When Barnabas came to Antioch, "and had ſeen the *grace* of GOD," that is, when he perceived the appropriate *effects* of goſpel truths, "he was glad." (Acts xi. 23.) St. Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, exhorts them to be obſervant, "leſt any man fail of the *grace* of GOD;" or, as he explains himſelf, fail of a pure, chaſte, and ſelf-denying temper.

Now this gracious temper being no leſs the effect or fruit of the holy Spirit than of evangelical truth in the ſoul, it has been always common in the chriſtian church to call thoſe tempers and exerciſes of mind which the ſcripture ſtiles "the *fruits* of the ſpirit," by the term *grace*. For as each of theſe, love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance, and the like, is called a fruit of the ſpirit, ſo each is called a grace of the Spirit, or a chriſtian grace. Thus in eccleſiaſtical and theological phraſeology, we ſay, faith, hope, and love are chriſtian *graces*; and he who proſpers in the ſpiritual exerciſes of religion is ſaid to *grow in grace*. Does any one reſiſt incitements and perſuaſions to vice with greater facility? Is he more eaſily induced to encounter difficulties in the diſcharge of known duty, or to forego perſonal gratification for the good of others? Is he more ſteady in his aim to bring every power of the ſoul to harmoniſe with the will, the plan, the glory of GOD? Is he more humble; more penitent;

more meek, gentle, and patient; more loving and zealous; more joyful in tribulation; more peaceable in his views and deportment; more ſimply dependent on ſovereign grace; truſting and rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus as the Lord our Righteouſneſs; having no confidence in the fleſh; walking by faith and not by ſight? Does he grow up towards the "meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt;" (Eph. iv. 13.) ſetting his affections on things above, hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſs, forgetting the things that are behind, "and reaching forth to thoſe which are before?" Then, in any of theſe or ſimilar inſtances, he *grows in grace.*

This view of grace, therefore, we ſhould conſider as the *effect* of ſovereign, objective, favour. *Faith* cometh by hearing the divine teſtimony. We *love* GOD, becauſe he is diſplayed, eſpecially in the goſpel, as lovely; we *fear* him, becauſe of his awful majeſty, his glorious power, and perfect rectitude: we *believe* the divine teſtimony, becauſe GOD that cannot lie, deceive, or do wrong, whoſe authority is equitable and ſupreme, *declares* it: we *hope* to enjoy future good things, becauſe the divine word contains the promiſe of them to certain characters. Is the chriſtian born again, and made a new creature, "ſo that old things are paſſed away, and all things become new?" It is by the "word of GOD," or the "word of truth," which is an incorruptible ſeed ſown in the mind. The new creation, or the new man, conſidered as an *effect* of revealed truth, is an aſſemblage of chriſtian

chriſtian graces, begotten and brought forth in the mind in connection with the indwelling influence of the Holy Spirit. And therefore the very ſame effect is aſcribed, at one time to the *word*, and at another time to the *Spirit;* becauſe both are concerned, in different reſpects, in producing it. For inſtance; if a "clean heart" be the *effect*, one time it is aſcribed to the Spirit of GOD,—"Create in me a clean heart, O God," or, in other words, "Renew a right ſpirit within me:" another time it is aſcribed to the word of truth,—"Now are ye clean, through the word which I have ſpoken to you." And indeed in this manner, moſt of the chriſtian graces, individually conſidered, are often repreſented. For inſtance; *faith* is an effect both of revealed truth and of the divine Spirit; for "faith cometh by hearing," and "faith is of the operation of GOD." It implies alike a *teſtimony* to be credited, and a *ſpiritual view* of that teſtimony; and the effect "believing" is properly aſcribed to either of them. The ſame repreſentation is applicable to *every other* chriſtian temper whatever which may be expreſſed by the term "grace."

§ 6. Now, as theſe diſpoſitions and holy tempers are evidently *required* in thoſe who enjoy the favours before mentioned objectively, and which are commonly denominated the "means of grace," there ſeems a propriety in calling faith, hope, love, joy, fear, &c. *required graces*. For when it is ſaid, "*Believe* in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt;"—"Let Iſrael *hope*

hope in the Lord;"—"Thou ſhalt *love* the Lord thy God;"—"*Rejoice* evermore;"—"O be *joyful* in the Lord;"—"Let Him be your *fear*, and let him be your dread:"—theſe and all other holy tempers, as effects of divine truth, are authoritatively REQUIRED by the ſupreme Governor. And to queſtion whether *all*, or only *ſome* of thoſe to whom the word of ſalvation is ſent, are thus *required* to be holy in all manner of tempers and converſation, is the ſame thing as to queſtion whether all, or only ſome of thoſe who hear the goſpel teſtimony are the ſubjects of God's moral government. What is *required* is nothing elſe than the *genuine effect* of revealed truth on a mind which is not in a criminal ſtate either of indifference or diſlike to it. Let the mind be in a right ſtate, or what it *ought* to be, and the required effect will follow of courſe. But if God were *obliged*, either in goodneſs, in equity, in faithfulneſs to his engagement, or in any reſpect whatever, to make the mind what it *ought* to be, required grace would be as univerſal as the goſpel meſſage. No one would or could then "fail of the grace of God," as to the Chriſtian temper. Nay, if God were any way *bound*, in juſtice, in honour, in favour, or in any reſpect, to *give and maintain* a right mind, or what *ought* to be, in order to *ſecure* the agent from tranſgreſſion, Sin would be impoſſible, contrary to fact. Therefore we may fairly conclude, that holy tempers are juſtly required of God, independently of the *ſtate* of the mind; becauſe truth is an adequate cauſe to produce the

the required effect where the diſpoſition is not faulty. Were any, when ſpeaking of the chriſtian's graces, to prefer the term "*reflected*" rather than "*required*," the diſtinction would be ſufficiently preſerved, and the term properly expreſſive. For objective grace, or moral means, may be compared to *incidental rays* of light; and the *proper effect* of theſe means to *reflected* rays. And indeed both might be uſed, were we to maintain a ſtill more accurate diſcrimination of thought; the one applied to the moral governor, the other to the moral agent. For what is *required* by the equitable governor, is *reflected* by the obedient ſubject. Yet, awful fact proves that requirement and obedience are far from being commenſurate. Whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, whether obedience or diſobedience mark their character, the requiſition is inflexibly the ſame.

§ 7. (III.) Under the term "grace," the ſacred oracles moreover intend *the holy ſtate of the mind*, by which, in conjunction with revealed truth, free agents are effectually diſpoſed to know, love, believe, repent; to receive exhibited benefits, to truſt in the Saviour, to delight in the law of GOD, and to ſerve him in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. When the Pſalmiſt ſays,* "The Lord will give *grace* and glory," it is expreſſive of a gracious nature, or a holy principle, and not merely ſome exhibited favour. When the Apoſtle James, after Solomon, ſays,† "But he giveth more grace: wherefore

* Pſa. lxxiv. 11.

† Jam. iv. 6. Prov. iii. 34. 1 Pet. v. 5.

wherefore he ſaith, God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," he conveys the ſame idea. The prophet Zechariah ſeems to intend the ſame thing in the following words;* "And I will pour upon the houſe of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications." The Scriptures appear full of this important ſentiment: the paſſages are very numerous, and require no comment. A few of them are the following. "Of his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace."† "Who, when he was come," (referring to Apollos) "helped them much which had believed through grace."‡ "He ſaid, My grace is ſufficient for thee."§ "Grace and peace be multiplied."‖ "But to every one of us is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt."¶ "Grace, mercy and peace from God our father, and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord."** "Grace be with thee: be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus."†† "Let us have grace to ſerve God acceptably—It is good that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace."‡‡ "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was beſtowed on me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."§§ "By the grace of God we had our converſation in the world."‖‖ In brief, this appears to be the import of thoſe concluding

* Zech. xii. 10. † John i. 16. ‡ Acts xviii. 27.
§ 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‖ 1 Pet. i. 2. ¶ Eph. iv. 7.
** 1 Tim. i. 2. †† 1 Tim. vi. 21. 2 Tim. ii. 1.
‡‡ Heb. xii. 28, xiii. 9. §§ 1 Cor. xv. 10. ‖‖ 2 Cor. i. 12.

cluding ſhort prayers in the Apoſtolic writings which we call Doxologies; "The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you—be with your ſpirit—be with you all."*

The ſame truth in idea is conveyed in many other forms of expreſſion, both in the Old and New Teſtament. "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right ſpirit within me—uphold me with thy free ſpirit."† "Until the ſpirit be poured upon us from on high."‡—Thus Jeſus, "Except a man be born of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh, and that which is born of the ſpirit is ſpirit."‖ And Paul, "The law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.—Ye are not in the fleſh but in the Spirit, if ſo be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any one have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.—But if the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you; he that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.—If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.—The Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities."§ "Now have we received, not the ſpirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of GOD; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of GOD."¶ The Scriptures abound with paſſages of the ſame import.

From

* Rom. xvi. 20, and numerous other places.

† Pſa. li. 10, 12. ‡ Iſa. xxxii. 15. ‖ John iii. 5—8.

§ Rom. viii. 2, 9—13. ¶ 1 Cor. ii. 12.

§ 8. From repreſentations thus decidedly expreſſive of efficacious influence, what leſs can be inferred than another diſtinct idea of *grace*, perfectly different from the two preceding. It is not *favour* exhibited objectively, as a teſtimony or proclamation of truth; nor is it the fruit or *effect* of truth, required by the ſupreme governor, and reflected by the obedient ſubject; as any unprejudiced perſon may eaſily perceive: but an *internal operation*, changing, renewing, regenerating, quickening, transforming, and helping the ſoul. This laſt is what I would call SUBJECTIVE GRACE. Its nature is diſtinguiſhable from every other ſenſe of the term, in that it is *the immediate effect of ſovereign will* IN *the ſoul*. *Exhibited* grace is *objective* only, and *towards* the agent: *required* and *exerciſed* grace is *from* the agent, as the voluntary *reflected* beams of the Sun of Righteouſneſs; but *ſubjective* grace is *in* the agent, as an indwelling influence. This implies the immediate preſence of the Holy Spirit in the ſaints, as the *ſource* of all actions morally good and holy.

§ 9. Hence it is obvious that grace diſplayed in the word, though ſovereign, is only the benevolence of GOD in the ſyſtem of moral government. It regards man as a moral agent, with freedom to accept or reject it; and therefore is no other, from its very nature, than a *moral mean* in the way of propoſal. The *excellency* of the object propoſed, however great, raiſes it to no higher character. GOD himſelf and his infinite perfections; Chriſt in his

his perſon and work; the Holy Spirit, and all his riches of merciful influence, when only announced, exhibited, and propoſed to the intellect and the active powers of the ſoul, can be conſidered in no other light than grace in the ſignification of *means*.

Conſidering attentively theſe three diſtinct views of grace, we perceive that required grace is an *effect* in the moral agent; and that the two others are united cauſes of that effect. The *objective* is properly and excluſively a *moral* cauſe; that is, a cauſe whoſe effect depends on the *manner* in which it is regarded by the voluntary and free agent, as received or rejected, improved or abuſed. It has a moral tendency of the beſt kind; but it may prove, thro' the agent's fault, either uſeleſs or even deſtructive. Thus the ſame goſpel is either "a ſavour of life unto life, or a ſavour of death unto death," according to the ſtate of the mind. Objective grace is a ſeed ſown; if it be found in a good and honeſt heart, that is, a ſpiritual ſtate of mind, it brings forth acceptable fruit; but if on the trodden path or ſtony places, an unrenewed mind, it will come to nothing. The *other* cauſe, conſiſting in the Holy Spirit's immediate energy, as before conſidered, has been ſometimes very improperly called a *moral* cauſe; for it is not founded in the idea of moral government, nor does the effect depend on the *will* of the recipient, or on the *manner* of its reception. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man,

man, but GOD."* "For it is GOD which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure."† Its moſt proper denomination is, a *phyſical* cauſe; a term uſed by many judicious divines to convey the idea of immediate influence on the mind. But it ſhould be recollected, that "phyſical," in this connection, denotes *poſitive energy* producing its effect without the intervention of the intellect and will of the agent. It is not an *object* of choice, but a new *nature* influencing the choice with reſpect to its proper objects; a *divine* nature, qualifying the ſoul to exerciſe itſelf in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. Nor does the idea of *ſupernatural* or *ſpiritual*, affect the propriety of calling it "phyſical," in the ſenſe now explained, becauſe they alſo are included in the denomination. Some indeed have, moſt improperly, confounded the terms "phyſical influence," and an influence changing the phyſical powers of the ſoul. But the divine energy for which I plead produces no change of the phyſical powers, though it ſuperinduces a new nature, or a principle of ſpiritual life and action.

§ 10. It therefore follows, that *objective* grace conſtitutes but a *part* of that motive by which the will is determined to good. If it conſtituted the *whole* of the motive, and every will of a moral agent were *equally free* in its choice, there can be no good reaſon why it ſhould not determine *all wills* alike. But this is contrary to fact. For the word preached does not profit ſome, not being mixed with faith in

* John i. 13. † Phil. ii. 13.

in them that hear it. The fact is, that, however it is underſtood in common language, and even in ſome philoſophical diſcuſſions, if by *motive* we underſtand that which *determines* the will in its choice, the *ſtate of the mind* is the moſt important part of it: For this *alone* can *enſure* a good volition. In proportion as the mind is the ſeat of benevolent, holy influence, its volitions will be good amidſt the moſt artful and powerful temptations. But the excellence of the *other* part of the motive, irreſpectively of benevolent influence rendering the mind well diſpoſed towards the objects, never can ſecure a happy reſult.

§ 11. It follows alſo that *required* grace, as flowing *from*, or exerciſed by the free agent, in love, faith, hope, &c. is not the *mere* effect of revealed truth and exhibited grace *towards* the agent. For why is the *ſame* goſpel to one a ſavour of life unto life, but to another a ſavour of death unto death? The difference is not in the goſpel itſelf: The Bible is the ſame; its language and exhibitions of truth and goodneſs the ſame. If, therefore, there be no *other part* of the motive by which the will is determined *in connection* with the objective good, the will is determined to good without an adequate cauſe; which is abſurd.

§ 12. Hence we may ſee the neceſſity and importance of *ſubjective grace*, which is the *effect of ſovereign will in the agent*. This, as before obſerved, is totally diſtinct from objective grace,

which is towards us, and independent of it; even as *life* is entirely diſtinct from food and exerciſe, and, as to its *nature*, independent of them. There is no avoiding this conſequence without offering the moſt unnatural violence to *Scripture*, to *reaſon*, and to *analogy*. More particularly,

§ 13. (1.) To interpret ſuch paſſages as the following in any other ſenſe than that of *ſubjective* grace, is nothing better than to offer the moſt unnatural violence to ſcripture. "Create in me a clean heart." "I will put my ſpirit within them." "I will pour out upon them the ſpirit of grace." "Except a man be born of the ſpirit." "My Father will give his holy ſpirit to them that aſk." "He worketh in us to will." "Who were born of God."

§ 14. (2.) To deny ſubjective grace is inconſiſtent with *reaſon*. What can be more ſo, than to ſuppoſe that the will acts *without* motive; or that the objective means conſtitute the *whole* of motive; or that the *will itſelf* is its own motive, by a ſelf-determining power unconnected with the antecedent and actual ſtate of the mind? Yet one or other of theſe abſurdities is unavoidable, if we maintain, with ſome divines, that there is no gracious influence but what is in, or inſeparable from the word. Their deſign, undoubtedly, is to maintain the honour of revealed truth, and the importance of right ſentiments: but they would do well to conſider, that *they* do moſt honour to the ſcriptures

tures who aſſign them that office which infinite wiſdom has appointed, and who do not aſcribe to them what is inconſiſtent with the ſcriptures themſelves, and contrary to the juſteſt reaſon.

§ 15. A few obſervations may perhaps contribute a little towards a juſter view of the ſubject.

1. *Subjective grace* is not the *proper* and *primary* ground of moral obligation. Indeed, in one ſenſe, *every* favour, however communicated, lays a ground of *additional* obligation; as different degrees of mental powers, the improvement of the mind by education, divine illumination, &c. But the proper and primary ground is the objective good, or the advantage exhibited, conſtituting the *moral means* of the agent; and which forms but one part of the determining motive. Were the whole of the motive which actually determines the will, the ground of moral obligation, it would follow that obligation and obedience would be commenſurate; which is the very ſubverſion of a moral ſyſtem.

2. *Required grace*, which is reflected by the agent, is properly the reſult of *prevailing* motive; which motive is a compound of objective and ſubjective grace. No moral means ever did or can prevail, when *alone*; and therefore gracious effects will not follow. Yet the moral governor *equitably requires* the fruit of righteouſneſs, where he has afforded the objective means; becauſe ſuch means are the proper ground of moral obligation. To ſuppoſe that any thing more is requiſite, is

fraught with conſequences groſsly abſurd. It would imply, either that the agent had a claim on being kept from abuſing his liberty; or, that God ought not to leave him to the freedom of his own will; or elſe, that his own freedom is an infallible preſerver; or, again, that this freedom is perfect chance; or, finally, that there are, in the actions of moral agents, effects without any adequate cauſe.

3. Though it be an important truth, that *objective* grace afforded is the proper ground of *requiring* reflected grace, yet it is hypothetically neceſſary, or infallibly certain, that nothing ſhort of ſovereign, *ſubjective* grace will, in fact, render any means available. To deny this, is the ſame as to aſſert, that the agent, in ſecuring his happineſs is, in ſome ſenſe, independent on God; which is impious. Therefore,

§ 16. To diſcard from our creed, as many profeſſing Chriſtians do, all divine influence, except what is implied in divine revealed truths, is inconſiſtent alike with the teſtimony of revelation and the dictates of impartial reaſon. That revealed truth is *neceſſary to beget* REQUIRED *grace*,—as faith, hope, love; knowledge, gratitude and joy, —is cheerfully granted; becauſe ſubjective grace cannot conſtitute a *motive*, without an *object*. But to *maintain* the *neceſſity* of revealed truth, in order to produce the fruit of exerciſed grace, is very different from *diſcarding* the *neceſſity* of ſubjective grace. In fact, there is the moſt abundant evidence, that *both* are *alike* neceſſary in order actually to produce the required fruit.

§ 17.

§ 17. (3.) The ſentiment I oppoſe is contrary to *analogy*; to which the holy ſcriptures often refer us. The ſacred records very frequently repreſent the ſovereign ſubjective grace of the Spirit, under the notion of a divine *life*. "He that hath the ſon hath *life*." "Alienated from the *life* of God." "A well of *living* water," &c.

§ 18. For the ſake of illuſtration, let us glance at different kinds of life, *elementary*, *vegetative*, and *animal*. For inſtance, *fire* has what may be called an *elementary* life. Let the light or *flame* of fire repreſent required or *reflected* grace. Abſurd would be the notion that *fuel* would *beget* a flame, without a diſtinct element, or *principle* of fire; or that the element of fire alone would be ſufficient to beget a flame, without fuel. The truth is, that flame is the product of *both* united. In like manner, both parts of a determining motive are neceſſary; an objective good as the fuel, and ſubjective influence as the kindling element. From both united in the ſoul, ariſes the holy flame of love to God and goodneſs.

§. 19. The ſame holds true in *vegetative* life. Suppoſe, for inſtance, that the verdure, bloſſom, and fruit of a plant, repreſent the graces of the Spirit in their *exerciſe*, as faith, love, humility, meekneſs, &c. No one would contend that, becauſe the ſun and air *beget* the verdure, bloom, and fruit, therefore there is no diſtinct *antecedent*

principle of vegetation. Nor would a gardener conclude, that becauſe his plant has the vital ſap, he need not expoſe it to the warmth of the ſun or the influence of pure air. The fact is, that the verdure, the health, and the fruitfulneſs of the plant are the reſult of the vital principle and the genial external influences, conjointly. Thus alſo the ſoul which is bleſſed, whoſe leaf withereth not, and which bringeth forth fruit in ſeaſon, has a ſpiritual nature and life, diſtinct from theſe effects, and of which they are the offspring, in conjunction with objective means. And he alone who gave exiſtence to the plant, and to every plant its own peculiar nature, can reſtore the vegetative life when once loſt. In vain is the dead tree planted in a fruitful ſoil, and well watered; in vain the ſalubrious air, the cheering light, and the genial ſun: the reſtoration of life is at the ſovereign pleaſure of new creating energy.

§ 20. We may find another illuſtration in *animal* life. Let the activity and exerciſe of the animal repreſent the graces of the ſpirit as exerted by the moral agent. No animal can ſubſiſt without food, air, and exerciſe; but we cannot infer thence, that theſe could *beget* the *principle* of life. This is preſuppoſed, and contributes no leſs than the *pabulum vitæ*, to the exiſtence of the exerciſed functions. The vital energies are, in truth, the reſult of *both* combined. The fair queſtion is, not how one life propagates itſelf, in virtue of the divine command "Be fruitful and multiply;" but

but how life is *reſtored*, when loſt. When a lamp is extinct, how is it lighted? when a plant has loſt the vital ſap, how is it revived? when a body is dead, how is it re-animated? Not by the accumulation of fuel; not by the ſurrounding elements; not by the exertions of man. I am aware how a Pelagian would endeavour to evade this illuſtration, by ſubſtituting another. Tho' the flame is extinguiſhed, he would ſay, a little breath would rekindle it; though the plant droop and wither, watering will revive it; though life be ſuſpended, the application of warmth and of ſtimulants will reſtore it. Illuſtrations are not arguments: compariſons are merely explanatory of our meaning. I have therefore no objection to a Pelagian, or any other, explaining his opinion in the way now mentioned. He conſiders the divine life of the ſoul as *partially* gone; and that it may be recovered merely by the application of means ſuch as education, moral ſuaſion, &c. I conſider the ſame life as *totally* gone; and that no moral means, without ſubjective grace, a miracle of ſovereign mercy, are adequate to reſtore it. Which of theſe opinions is founded in truth is to be ſought, not from illuſtrations, but from ſcriptural arguments. My deſign, by compariſons, is to *explain*, not to *prove* my meaning; except when that explanation includes a ſcriptural ſtatement. For inſtance, the ſcripture compares divine influence to a heavenly fire *communicated*: the diſciples were *baptized* with it; and they *received* it, as what they had not before. The ſcripture alſo

compares the ſoul deprived of divine life, to a withered branch ſevered from a tree; and apoſtates, to trees plucked up by the roots. And when animal life is the ground of compariſon, divine influence is repreſented as quickening the dead, after the likeneſs of Chriſt's reſurrection. So that the illuſtrations as well as the teſtimonies of ſcripture are in favour of ſubjective grace.

§ 21. Another ſet of analogical illuſtrations might be borrowed from the animal *ſenſes*. Suppoſe we compare the exerciſe of required grace to the exerciſe of *viſion*; with which compariſon the ſcripture abounds. Here are evidently three particulars concerned; objects exhibited to view, the viſion, and the faculty itſelf. The viſion, it is plain, is the effect of two things united, the object viewed, and the viſive faculty. The one is ſubjective, the other objective; and the act of ſeeing is the reflected reſult.

§ 22. Again; let grace in exerciſe be compared, as it very frequently is, in ſcripture, to the act of hearing ſounds. In this alſo two things muſt concur. In vain are ſounds produced, if there be no faculty of hearing; and ineffectual is the faculty, if there be no ſound. Hearing, therefore, *ſuppoſes* the faculty, and requires the ſonorous percuſſion of air. The one is reciprocally indebted to the other for producing the effect.

§ 23. It would be eaſy to multiply inſtances, in

in all the other animal ſenſes; *taſting*, *ſmelling*, and *feeling*. And it is obſervable that the ſcriptures allude to them all, in reference to this very ſubject. The exerciſe of grace is *taſting* that the Lord is gracious; but there muſt be an *object* and a ſubjective faculty in order to produce the effect. It is alſo *ſmelling* the ſweet odour of divine truth; which implies the object and ſubjective quality. And finally it is alſo a *feeling*,—which requires the ſame diſtinction.

Thus, univerſal analogy proclaims an *object* and a *principle* to be neceſſary, in order to produce vital effects, in illuſtration of the nature of the caſe aſſerted in ſcripture and ſupported by reaſon.

§ 24. Let us now conſider, more particularly, the *nature* of ſubjective grace. It is properly denominated a *divine* nature; and is the immediate effect of ſovereign, gracious energy, by which it is diſtinguiſhed from a *mere natural* difference between one perſon and another. Natural differences are exceedingly various. Some human beings, as well as other ſpecies of animals, are fierce, violent, and untractable, others quiet, calm, and gentle; ſome of a quarrelſome, others of a peaceful temper; ſome courageous, and others timid. Theſe differences, however, are only ſhades of diſtinction in the *ſame* nature: but ſubjective grace conſtitutes *another* nature, ſpiritual and divine.—Of this alſo we are furniſhed with illuſtrations from every part of animated nature. Grains of wheat may differ among themſelves, and

and are yet of the *ſame* nature; but compared with barley they are of a nature extremely different. One oak may differ from another; but the very nature of a cedar is eſſentially diſtinct.*

§ 25. Now what conſtitutes theſe differences of nature? Why ſhould a cedar differ from an oak, a roſe from a lily, or a myrtle from a thorn? The genial influence of the ſun and atmoſphere, and even the ſoil itſelf may be the ſame; and yet they

* "The Spirit of God is given to the true ſaints, to dwell in them, as his proper and laſting abode; and to influence their hearts, as a principle of *new nature*, or as a divine, ſupernatural ſpring of life and action. The ſcriptures repreſent the Holy Spirit, not only as moving, and occaſionally influencing the ſaints, but as dwelling in them as his temple, his proper abode, and everlaſting dwelling-place. (1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16. John xiv. 16, 17.) And he is repreſented as being ſo united to the faculties of the ſoul, that he becomes there a principle or ſpring of a *new nature* and life.—The ſap of the true vine is not only conveyed into them, as the ſap of a tree may be conveyed into a veſſel; but is conveyed as ſap is from a tree into one of its living branches, where it becomes a *principle* of life. The Spirit of God being thus communicated and united to the ſaints, they are from thence properly denominated from it, and are called *ſpiritual*.—The grace which is in the hearts of the ſaints is of the *ſame nature* with the divine holineſs, tho' infinitely leſs in degree; as the brightneſs of a diamond which the ſun ſhines upon, is of the ſame nature with the brightneſs of the ſun, but only that it is as nothing to it in degree. Therefore Chriſt ſays (John iii. 6.) *That which is born of the Spirit is ſpirit*; i. e. The grace that is begotten in the hearts of the ſaints, is ſomething of the ſame nature with that Spirit, and ſo is properly called a *ſpiritual nature*."—(Edwards on Religious Affections, Works, Vol. IV. p. 104, &c.)

they put on forms the moſt diversified. Why ſhould a horſe differ from an ox, and both from a ſheep, in ſo many reſpects, though they breathe the ſame air, eat the ſame herbage, and drink at the ſame ſpring? The cauſe muſt be traced to the *ſovereign pleaſure* of the creator, (1 Cor. xv. 38.)*

§ 26.

* "Other power may make a great alteration in men's preſent frames and feelings; but it is the power of a *Creator* only that can change the *nature*. And no diſcoveries or illuminations, but thoſe that are divine and ſupernatural, will have this ſupernatural effect.—All grace and goodneſs in the hearts of the ſaints is entirely from GOD; and they are univerſally and *immediately* dependent on him for it.—He gives his Spirit to be united to the faculties of the ſoul, and to dwell there *after the manner of a principle of nature*: ſo that the ſoul, in being endued with grace, is endued with a *new nature*.—In the ſoul where Chriſt ſavingly *is*, there he *lives*. He does not merely live *without* it, ſo as violently to actuate it; but he lives *in* it, ſo that the ſoul alſo is *alive*. Grace in the ſoul is as much from Chriſt, as the light in a glaſs, held out in the ſunbeams, is from the ſun. But this repreſents the manner of the communication of grace to the ſoul, but in part; becauſe the glaſs remaining as it was, the *nature* of it not being changed at all, it is as much without any lightſomeneſs in its nature as ever. But the ſoul of a ſaint receives light from the Sun of Righteouſneſs in ſuch a manner that its *nature* is changed, and it becomes properly a luminous thing. Not only does the ſun ſhine in the ſaints, but they alſo become little ſuns, partaking of the nature of the fountain of their light. In this reſpect, the *manner* of their derivation of light is like that of the lamps in the tabernacle, rather than that of a reflecting glaſs; which tho' they were lit up by fire from heaven, yet thereby became themſelves burning, ſhining things.—Grace is compared to a ſeed implanted, that not only is *in* the ground, but has *hold* of it; has *root* there, *grows* there, and is an abiding *principle* of life and nature there."—EDWARDS on Religious Affections, Works, Vol. IV. p. 233.

§ 26. It may be objected, If ſubjective grace be a *nature* abſolutely different from, and independent of our will and the means we can employ, what room is there for PRAYER, or for an expectation of obtaining advantage from any of the *exerciſes* of religion? I reply, where there *is* a divine nature, ſacred truth and ordinances, and eſpecially application to GOD by prayer, are *ſuited* to its growth and welfare. And prayer is the moſt *rational* ſervice in which a dependent nature can be engaged; becauſe the very idea of this new nature being the fruit of *ſovereign will* is at once a ground of encouragement that we may obtain it, and a ſtrong reaſon why we ſhould apply to GOD for it's beſtowment. It is at his free diſpoſal to give us his Holy Spirit: to whom therefore ſhould we apply for the invaluable gift, but to him? And he has taught us, that this is the right method of proceeding. (Luke xi. 9—13.) "I ſay unto you, Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that aſketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it ſhall be opened. If a ſon ſhall aſk bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone? Or if he aſk a fiſh, will he give him a ſerpent? Or if he ſhall aſk an egg, will he offer him a ſcorpion? If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?"

§ 27.

§ 27. From what has been ſaid, we may ſee in what ſenſe the commonly received expreſſions, that *the word of truth is the inſtrument of conveying grace to the ſoul*, or, that *the ſpirit never works without the word in renewing the mind*, &c. are to be conſiſtently underſtood: and in what ſenſe alſo thoſe paſſages of ſcripture are to be taken, where a ſaving change is expreſſed, ſometimes *without*, and at others in connection *with* the word. *Spiritual perceptions* of truth are by means of the word of truth, but the *light of God* in the ſoul, whereby it is capacitated to perceive it, muſt be in a direct and immediate manner from the *Father of Lights*. The thing perceived, and the qualification for perceiving it, are not to be confounded. The *new man* conſiſting of new perceptions, judgments, paſſions, and exerciſes, is begotten by the ſovereign will of GOD in union with the word of truth. And even a *divine nature*, in a ſenſe, is produced by the promiſes, in the ſame way. For what is the nature of GOD but love? Now to poſſeſs and improve a divine nature, in this ſenſe, or *the outflowings of love* to GOD and man, we muſt contemplate and receive the promiſes in the light of GOD. By faith we receive them, and are transformed by them. The glory of the Lord ſhines in the goſpel objectively; and the believing ſoul is changed into the divine image, from glory to glory. But this is done, not merely by the *object* contemplated, but alſo *by the Spirit of the Lord*. And that Spirit exiſts, not in the *word* but in the *mind*. This propoſition,

"GOD

"GOD is Love," contains a glorious truth; but it is no more ſeen in its *own* light, than any other *truth* however common. GOD, indeed, is ſeen in his *own* light, as the ſun is; but the light by which we ſee the propoſition to be a glorious truth proceeds not *from* the declaration concerning GOD: nor yet does it enter *with* the propoſition; for all illumination of the *Spirit* is from *within*, not from *without*. Light in the mind, as an operation of the Spirit, is not a ſtream which has flowed from an objective truth, but a light created *in* the ſoul, by which it is enabled to perceive, in a ſpiritual manner, that GOD is love, that Chriſt is an able and willing Saviour, that the goſpel is a bright and glorious diſpenſation of mercy, &c. This is beautifully expreſſed by the Apoſtle Paul, (2 Cor. iv. 6.) "For GOD, who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath *ſhined in our hearts*, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt." Here is included, not only the light of *Knowledge* of the divine glory, but alſo the *light of God* ſhining in the heart; from which, in connection with its object, all ſpiritual Knowledge takes its riſe.

§ 28. Some, while endeavouring to exalt the divine word, and to ſhew its importance in effecting a ſaving change in the ſoul, have greatly, tho' not intentionally, miſrepreſented the nature of the Spirit's operation, and thereby diſhonoured him. I fear this is a growing error in many of our pulpits and ſocieties. When Chriſt ſays that his words

words are *ſpirit* and *life*, he cannot ſurely mean that his words are the Holy Spirit and the Life of God; but rather that they treat of ſpiritual and living realities, and are adapted to nouriſh and invigorate grace, which is a ſpiritual and living principle. Some have compared the entrance of truth into the mind, to a candle entering a room, when the candle and the light enter together; to the excluſion of all other illumination. But this is an erroneous repreſentation; and the error conſiſts in making the word, (though compared to a light, a lamp, &c. becauſe of the glorious truths it ſtates, and their *uſe* to us in the *preſent ſtate* of things) to be the work of the Spirit, and in thus making the Spirit enter the mind in the manner of objective truth. It repreſents the Spirit's light as coming into the ſoul from *without*, either blended with or accompanying the word, rather than as created *in* the ſoul. The ſacred oracles are indeed as "a light ſhining in a dark place;" and this light "ſhines into the hearts" of ſome: but this could never take place without *another* influence proceeding from the Spirit of God capacitating the heart to underſtand the glorious goſpel, which is only objective truth. Let us give to the ſcriptures the things that are theirs, and to the bleſſed Spirit the things that are his. "The ſpirit of man is the candle (or lamp) of the Lord;" (Prov. xx. 27.) but the Spirit of the Lord muſt light it, for ſpiritual purpoſes. And in this reſpect, the words of the Pſalmiſt, (Pſa. xviii. 28.) are ſtrictly applicable; "Thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkneſs."

CON-

CONCLUSION.

§ 1. *Introduction.* *Advantage of these principles,* § 2. *(I.) In reference to* moral ſcience. *Liberty and Neceſſity.* § 3. *The* origin *of moral evil.* § 4. *Preſcience and free Will.* § 5. *The exiſtence of ſin and the perfections of Deity.* § 6. *The real nature of virtue and vice.* § 7. *A moral ſyſtem.* § 8. *The doctrine of motives.* § 9. *The abſurdity of two eternal principles, one good and the other evil.* § 10—13. *The doctrine of moral obligation.* § 14. *(II.) In reference to* ſcriptural theology. *The principles of this work are calculated to expoſe* other *ſyſtems and points in divinity, beſide Arminianiſm.* Antinomian *tenets ſtated.* § 15—17. *Expoſed.* § 18. Sandemanian *tenets.* § 19. *Pelagianiſm.* § 20. *Wrong notions of the Kingdom of Chriſt.* § 21. *Propriety of calls and invitations to ſinners.* § 22. *The law as a covenant and a rule.* § 23. *Diſputes about grace and merit.* § 24. *Extent of redemption.* § 25—29. *Juſtification.* § 30. *Regeneration.* § 31—34. *The American controverſy reſpecting the way of ſalvation.* § 35—40. *(III.) In reference to perſonal religion.*

§ 1. SENTIMENTS are valuable in proportion as they are applicable to uſeful purpoſes; that is, according to their tendency to facilitate the acquiſition of important knowledge, or to rouſe the dormant energies of our nature to practiſe

practiſe thoſe things which we know to be right. In all controverſy there is at leaſt a *ſeeming* oppoſition; but often, among good men at leaſt, who muſt be conſcious of the beſt intentions or ſtand ſelf-condemned, the jar of ſentiments and the contrariety of concluſions are owing to the want of a clear underſtanding of each other. And that miſunderſtanding may long continue for want of a middle term by which both claims may be meaſured. All diſcrepancy of opinion muſt be owing either to falſe reaſoning on true *data*, or to falſe *data*, be the reaſoning what it may. Thoſe principles therefore muſt be of prime importance which have a genuine tendency to detect the ſophiſms of a ſyſtem, or to aſcertain the line of truth, amidſt the intricacies of adverſe parties. From the preceding repreſentations of Equity and Sovereignty, deduced from the holy ſcriptures, we may derive many important advantages, if I miſtake not, in reference to *moral ſcience*, ſcriptural *theology*, and perſonal *religion*.

§ 2. (I.) In reference to MORAL SCIENCE. Few ſubjects have been more acutely debated, by moral philoſophers, than the doctrines of *Liberty* and *Neceſſity*. But moſt of the miſtakes and perpetual claſhings between theſe writers, ſeem to have ariſen from a common gratuitous aſſumption, that the truth muſt lie excluſively on the one ſide or the other of the ſeeming oppoſite ſyſtems; that is, that man muſt be *free* to the excluſion of neceſſity, or *neceſſitated* in his actions, to the excluſion of all freedom properly ſo called. Whereas we may ſee

from the repreſentations of Equity and Sovereignty contained in this work, that every man is at once both free and neceſſitated in different reſpects. He is *free to evil*, in the moſt proper ſenſe of freedom, to the excluſion of all neceſſitating influence from the Firſt Cauſe; but yet *neceſſitated to good*, without infringing his liberty of choice in the morality of his acts. While the will is left perfectly free in its acts of chooſing, according to the greateſt apparent good; the diſpoſition itſelf, by which the choice is directed, is the reſult either of paſſive power or of ſovereign benevolence. If Liberty, therefore, be viewed as connected with Equity, and Neceſſity as connected with Sovereignty, and man be regarded at once as *equitably free* and *ſovereignly* (that is benevolently) *neceſſitated*, the perplexity is unravelled, and the ſeeming inconſiſtency diſpelled. The divine nature is the ſtandard and ſource of all truth; it might therefore be reaſonably expected that the true key for opening ſo intricate a lock muſt be juſt views of the *divine character*, in reference to free agents. Equity, in the ſenſe defined, will teach us, that man is free, and muſt be ſo, from principles the moſt firm and irrefragable; principles founded in the reſpective natures and eſſential properties of GOD and Man. If man be not *free*, abſolutely free, from all decretive neceſſitation, in the obliquity of his moral acts, moral government is but an illuſion, and retribution but a deceptive name. But divine Sovereignty, in the ſenſe explained, ſhews that man, in another view, is the ſubject of *neceſſity*; a neceſſity founded on the nature, properties, and prerogative of GOD, and

and the inevitable condition of man conſidered as a creature, and not merely as a ſinner. Here, and here alone, can we behold the full evidence of theſe axioms, however univerſally acknowledged; ALL EVIL IS FROM OURSELVES, becauſe the ſubjects of paſſive power and free will; and ALL GOOD IS FROM GOD, becauſe he *alone* is good, and the diſtribution of goodneſs can proceed from no other ſource than ſovereign pleaſure. The ſame perſon then, is, in different reſpects, the ſubject both of proper liberty and of neceſſity. As the ſubject of moral government, accountable for his wrong choice, he is free; but as the ſubject of a gracious ſovereignty, he is neceſſitated.

§ 3. Nearly allied to the preceding ſubject, and not leſs perplexing, though leſs has been written upon it, is the *origin of moral evil.* While ſome have contended, that we ought to deſpair, at leaſt in this life, of obtaining clear evidence on the ſubject; others have boldly affirmed, that moral evil is of poſitive ordination. This is almoſt the univerſal ſentiment of the modern advocates for philoſophical neceſſitation, who reject the Calviniſtic ſyſtem of Theology. They are therefore obliged to infer, that there is no *real* evil in ſin; that it is only accidental and relative, after the manner of natural evils. According to them, all the evil is confined to the feeling of the ſubject, rather than a deviation from eſſential rectitude; and if the ſufferer ſaw vice and ſin as GOD ſees them, he would inſtantly be happy. If this be not the direct way to obtain a ſeared conſcience and ſelf-complacency in tranſgreſſion, it is difficult

to ſay where to find one. Is not this giving the lie direct to apoſtolic teſtimony, that ſin is *exceeding ſinful*; and to the general declarations of ſcripture that *God hates* all ſin, and the workers of iniquity on ſin's account? But it is grievous that perſons otherwiſe of ſound principles ſhould be ſo incautious as to run into this error. The late Dr. HOPKINS of America, bold beyond all the orthodox that ever went before him, though he attempts to guard his aſſertions againſt profane conſequences, is highly cenſurable. The tenet itſelf, that GOD has *decreed* moral evil, is abſolutely indefenſible. It is, in fact, to deſtroy the eſſence of a moral ſyſtem. Dr. H. muſt have been driven to this falſe refuge, by the difficulty which his ardent mind found in accounting for the origin of evil in any other way. But far better would it be to continue in humble ignorance, than thus to charge GOD fooliſhly. If, however, we view a free agent in the light of Equity and Sovereignty, in their exerciſe reſpectively towards a moral agent, a creature at once free and neceſſitated; becauſe a paſſive recipient of his good, and yet the ſubject of free will and paſſive power; if we view the creature, as indeed he is, abſolutely dependent, and in himſelf an eſſential contraſt to the Creator, in point of independence and all-ſufficience, we ſhall find a *demonſtration* that moral evil cannot proceed from GOD by any agency or decretive appointment whatever, but from the creature's paſſive power, influencing, as a negative cauſe, his free will. Sin therefore muſt proceed from *ourſelves alone*, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe. Though placed

placed in circumſtances the moſt advantageous conceivable, by the exerciſe of that equity which gives to all their due, both as creatures and as accountable, man will ſhew what he is *in himſelf*, when not ſupported by benevolent, ſovereign, unmerited influence. And what belongs to man *becauſe* a free agent, is equally applicable to *all* free agents, without exception.

§ 4. Cloſely connected with the forementioned ſubjects, is the difficult problem, how to reconcile the divine *preſcience* of moral evil with the *free will* of the agent. Without juſt views of Equity and Sovereignty, this problem muſt remain incapable of a ſatisfactory ſolution; but in their light, the difficulty vaniſhes. The good of actions is foreknown, becauſe ſovereignly appointed; but the evil of them is foreknown, in their deficient cauſe, paſſive power, becauſe that cauſe is equitably permitted to reveal itſelf, without ſovereign prevention.

§ 5. Hence we alſo perceive, by the ſame light, that the *exiſtence of ſin* is perfectly conſiſtent with the *perfections of Deity*. If equity be exerciſed, in the ſame degree the free agent ſhews what he is in himſelf, both as a creature, and as an agent directing his free actions. And if Sovereign benevolence be exerciſed towards him, in the ſame degree will he appear a monument of unmerited favour, promoting his own happineſs and the perfection of the univerſe. The cauſe of moral evil being ſtrictly in himſelf alone, as the ſubject of paſſive power and

free will, his errors are only ſuffered to take place, without being actively cauſed by the Deity. They are foreſeen as what will reſult from defect, and not as the effect of poſitive appointment. What is good in the act is indeed appointed, but not its failure and criminality. The agent's obligation is, to intend the ultimate perfection of univerſal being, to will as GOD wills, and to act in ſubſerviency to him; but there being in him a cauſe of failure, when not ſupported by efficacious, unmerited aid, infinite knowledge muſt needs foreſee it as *certainly* future, and infinite wiſdom overrules it for the higheſt good. Light and darkneſs appear intermixed; but the light alone proceeds from GOD, and the darkneſs from the creature's paſſive power. Yet the darkneſs ſerves, by all-comprehending wiſdom and infinite benevolence, to ſhew forth the greater glory of the light.

§ 6. A juſt view of the divine character, as equitable and ſovereign, will enable us to aſcertain with greater preciſion the real nature of *Virtue* and *Vice*. God, as a Sovereign, *wills* all the perfection exiſting in the univerſe, and when a free agent *wills* and really deſigns the ſame in his accountable acts, by laudable means, he exerciſes *pure virtue*; and whatever act comes ſhort of this, is called virtue only in a partial and comparative ſenſe, and is not inconſiſtent with a character predominantly vicious. And as the virtue of actions is a part of the perfection of the univerſe, it is included in the ſovereign appointment. Vice, therefore, is a deviation from the

the line of that actual rectitude or perfection which GOD ſovereignly wills. The agent propoſes to himſelf a different end of his actions, and therefore ſeeks happineſs by means not laudable. And though many ſuch acts are *called* virtuous, becauſe they have a partial good tendency, yet in reality they are vicious, owing to the agent having a different will and aim from what belongs to pure virtue. Hence, becauſe the Deity's own acts are agreeable to him, all tending to eſſential perfection, and therefore in the higheſt ſenſe virtuous; ſo every deviation from that line of rectitude muſt be diſpleaſing and hateful to him, and is properly vicious. Equity, rightly underſtood, will ſhew this to be the fact. If praiſe, approbation, and delight be not *due* to infinite wiſdom, to abſolute rectitude, and to perfection of deſign, that is, to pure virtue, nothing can deſerve them; and blame, diſapprobation, and abhorrence can belong only to the *oppoſites* of pure virtue, that is, to vice. Equity, therefore, requires, that virtue be approved, and vice diſapproved, for the ſame reaſon that divine rectitude is approvable.

§ 7. It cannot be expected that moral ſcience ſhould make much progreſs, but in proportion as juſt notions of a *moral ſyſtem* are aſcertained. But this can only be attained through the medium of the moral governor's real character. To little purpoſe do we reaſon upon the intellectual and active powers of man, if we bring not into the

thoſe perfections of Deity which are exerciſed toward the ſyſtem. And I believe the obſervation will be found accurate, that every act of the divine Governor towards a moral ſyſtem is reducible either to Equity or to Sovereignty. Juſt views, therefore, of theſe glorious perfections of God, appear eſſentially neceſſary in order to form right notions of a moral ſyſtem. To ſovereign benevolence belong its very exiſtence, welfare, and final perfection; to divine equity belong its probation, accountability, laws, and ſanctions. Its conformity to rectitude and happineſs, are effected by ſovereign benevolence; its being left to the freedom of will, the influence of its paſſive power, and the uncontrolled conſequence, is the pure effect of equitable government.

§ 8. It is of intereſting moment, in moral ſcience, to have preciſe ideas of the true *doctrine of Motives*. No inconſiderable part of the diſpute reſpecting Liberty and Neceſſity, moral obligation, and ſeveral theological points, has ariſen from this want of preciſion. Until, however, we have acquired correct views of the divine character, in the two-fold reſpect ſtated in the preceding pages, we are never likely to obtain ſatisfying evidence on the ſubject of determining motives. If we make the *whole* of motive to conſiſt in the object contemplated, the ſame object would affect all minds alike; and if we allow a difference in the minds affected, the object cannot be the whole of the motive. We are therefore conſtrained to infer, that

that the objects, or moral means, which GOD, as an equitable governor, affords to his accountable ſubjects, are not efficaciouſly ſufficient. The ſtate of the mind muſt be taken into the account, for the ſolution of different reſults in chooſing good and evil. A difference of mental ſtate, whether by original conformation, or by amelioration, can proceed from no other ſource than ſovereign goodneſs; but a difference by deterioration, though *occaſioned* by the exerciſe of equity, is not *cauſed* by it; and much leſs is it cauſed by ſovereignty. Hence we ſee, that equity affords objective means as a part of the determining motive; and ſovereignty affords that ſtate of mind which enſures a virtuous reſult; while paſſive power, equitably ſuffered to affect the mental ſtate without the counteracting influence of ſovereign aid, becomes a negative cauſe of a wrong choice. The external part of the motive is the ſame when preſented to different minds; the internal part which enſures a virtuous choice, can proceed from no other ſource than GOD's favour; and the internal part which enſures a wrong choice, can be nothing but a comparative defect, which may be called metaphyſical evil, or paſſive power, and has no other ſource than limited exiſtence.

§ 9. By the principles defended in the preceding pages we may more clearly diſcern the *abſurdity* of *two eternal* principles, one good and the other evil. This notion has been not only held by the Perſian magi, and the Manicheans in the early

early ages of Chriſtianity, but alſo, too much favoured by ſome philoſophers of modern times. To thoſe who underſtood the nature of the divine character, in reference to creatures, their folly muſt have been expoſed as ſoon as uttered. The folly of their concluſions, indeed, has been often ſhewn from the incompatibility of two principles being eternal; but this argument leaves the *cauſe* of evil unexplained. Its effect was not to *enlighten*, but to *ſilence* the objector. The ſingle conſideration of what is *due* to a creature, or what is the operation of abſolute juſtice towards it, muſt at once unveil its comparative imperfection; and this ſuffered to operate, unreſtrained by ſovereign interpoſition, will ſhew, that ſtability in goodneſs is *peculiar* to GOD, and that evil is *peculiar* to a creature. Evil can have no exiſtence without a ſubject. Evil unconnected with good is an impoſſibility; for what is the nature of evil but a deviation from perfection in a ſubject? If therefore there were no ſtandard of perfection, antecedently conſidered, there could be no evil. That infinite perfection ſhould be liable to evil of any kind, involves a contradiction: it is to ſuppoſe the only ſtandard and meaſure of evil, to become itſelf evil, while yet without a good ſtandard *nothing* could be evil. Hence it irrefragably follows that only a being comparatively imperfect, that is, a creature, can poſſibly be the ſubject of evil. As there is no medium between Creator and creature, the juſt inference is, that evil cannot precede created exiſtence; not evil of any kind, or in any degree, except in idea. Limitation

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as to eſſential perfection, otherwiſe denominated comparative imperfection, metaphyſical evil, or paſſive power, enters neceſſarily into the *difference* between Creator and creatures, and therefore is equally inſeparable from all creatures alike, the higheſt as well as the loweſt, the moſt pure as well as the moſt polluted. It is not a *privation* but a neceſſary *negation* of good; I ſay a *neceſſary* negation, for an *infinitely* perfect creature involves a contradiction. In the univerſe, *phyſically* and poſitively conſidered, there is no evil, properly ſpeaking; for matter and motion, and the eſtabliſhed order by which they operate, are good, and worthy of infinite perfection to effect, though neceſſarily ſubject to limitation, and though ſometimes they prove *relatively* injurious. And as to moral evil, which alone is properly denominated *evil*, is it not ſelf-evident that it can have no exiſtence but from a defectible moral agent? Hence it is plain, that no evil whatever, metaphyſical, phyſical, or moral, can poſſibly exiſt prior to created exiſtence. And we are led irreſiſtibly to theſe fair concluſions, from a juſt view of divine equity, as explained in this volume.

§ 10. Another important branch of moral ſcience is the doctrine of *moral obligation*. It is no wonder that philoſophers differ ſo widely from one another, and moſt of them from the truth, while the real character of the moral governor occupies but a ſecondary part in the diſcuſſion. *Obligation*, in general, is a binding force. But *moral* obli-

obligation differs eſſentially from that which is merely phyſical. The latter excludes freedom of will; but not the former. A man may be *obliged* to go to priſon, or to be executed, though againſt his will. *Moral* obligation implies force *hypothetically* only: that is, IF the agent would attain his ultimate happineſs, he *muſt* chooſe the road of pure virtue. But whence comes the propoſal, either explicit or implied, of ultimate happineſs? From the ſovereign benevolence of the Creator, who has made us what we are, capable of ſuch happineſs, and ever ſeeking it inſtinctively. And why are we *obliged* to ſeek it in the way of *pure virtue*, or by conformity to perfect rectitude? Becauſe virtue and ultimate happineſs are inſeparably connected *in the nature of things*, that is, in eternal *truth*, or the nature of *God*, and *divine equity requires* that he who ſeeks not his happineſs by pure virtue ſhall not obtain it.

Hence we ſee that infinite, ſovereign benevolence *propoſes* ultimate happineſs to a free agent; but equity *obliges* the agent to ſeek it in the way of virtue rather than of vice, of rectitude rather than of obliquity. Benevolence not only *propoſes* to the agent a happy end, but alſo *appoints* an inſtinctive propenſity after general happineſs, and communicates aſſiſtance to *ſome*, with the exerciſe of unreſtrained volitions in the choice of good. But equity demands alſo that this agent ſhall be free to chooſe his *own* antecedents — to chooſe *amiſs*, as well as to chooſe aright; and, in caſe he adopts thoſe antecedents which are connected in the nature of things with loſs of hap-

happineſs, (for who can be happy without conformity to GOD?) *obliges* him to abide by the diſaſtrous conſequence.

§ 11. Theſe things being duly conſidered, we may perceive the errors and the defects of moſt theories of moral obligation. "Why am I obliged to keep my word?" inquires Archdeacon PALEY; "Becauſe it is *right*, ſays one.—Becauſe it is agreeable to the *fitneſs of things*, ſays another.—Becauſe it is comformable to *reaſon* and *nature*, ſays a third. —Becauſe it is conformable to *truth*, ſays a fourth. —Becauſe it promotes the *public good*, ſays a fifth.—Becauſe it is required by the *will of God*, concludes a ſixth." Having rejected theſe ſolutions as unſatisfactory, how does Dr. PALEY himſelf anſwer the queſtion? "Becauſe I *am urged to do ſo by a violent motive;* (namely, the expectation of being after this life rewarded, if I do, or puniſhed for it, if I do not;) *reſulting from the command of another* (namely, of God)." But though this acute writer ſays, that "this ſolution goes to the bottom of the ſubject, as no further queſtion can reaſonably be aſked," his aſſertion is not ſatisfactory. If thoſe "anſwers all leave the matter *ſhort*," his reply is *wide* of the mark. With a little reflection, the reader may ſatisfy himſelf of the juſtice of this remark. According to Dr. P. "A man is ſaid to be *obliged*, when he is urged by a violent motive, reſulting from the command of another." This definition applies only to a *ſenſe* or *perception* of obligation, and leaves the

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proper ground of it untouched. A *violent motive* is explained to be the expectation of being, after this life, rewarded or punished. According to this, if I have no "expectation," I have no "violent motive;" and if I have not the latter, I am not *obliged*. But are men *obliged* only according to their EXPECTATIONS of rewards or punishments? To say that this "results from the command of another," or "the will of God," does not alter the case. For though this makes the motive to be violent when perceived; yet it shews not the reason *why* the command of another *morally* obliges, whether we perceive its urgent force or not. This in fact, is a very general error in the writings of moral philosophers:—to confound the *perception* or *sense* of duty, with its *ground* of obligation.

12. When a person is said to be *obliged* in honour, in gratitude, in truth, in justice, or in reason, the meaning is, that IF he would be honourable, grateful, true, just, and reasonable, which are so many consequents, he MUST (he is forced, urged, constrained to) choose the antecedents. But, on the contrary, IF a person adopt the antecedents of dishonour, ingratitude, falsehood, injustice, or folly, he MUST abide by the corresponding consequents. But we should recollect that in these, and a thousand more instances, the obligation arises from an existing certain connection between the means and the end. Though the *end* be good only in erroneous estimation, still the agent is

obliged

obliged (though not *morally*) to adopt means connected with ſuch end. A gentleman receives a challenge to fight a duel, for words or conduct which are generally conſidered by people of faſhion as deſerving of ſuch reſentment. Honour is the end, and fighting the means; and the exiſting connection is certain. He is therefore *obliged* in honour to accept the challenge; that is, IF he will retain his character in the faſhionable world, as a man of honour, he MUST fight. But it would be abſurd to ſay, that he is *morally* obliged to fight; that his virtue and ultimate happineſs have a certain, exiſting connection with his fighting. The ends or conſequents which agents propoſe to themſelves are as numerous as they chooſe to make them; and they are, as agents, at liberty to adopt their means or antecedents. Wiſdom conſiſts in the ſuitable adaptation of means to ends; and the nature or quality of wiſdom, in the choice of one end rather than another. Perſons are wiſe to do evil, when they have ſkill in the uſe of means, but the end propoſed is unworthy. The children of this world are often wiſer in their generation than the children of light; for though the latter have choſen the *more worthy end*, yet the former diſcover more ſkill in adopting ſuitable *means*, as conducive to effect *their own* purpoſes.

§ 13. No perſon can be morally obliged to any act which is inconſiſtent with *pure virtue*; but to *this*, it is evident, every moral agent is conſtantly obliged. The ultimate *ſtandard* of virtue is the *divine*

divine rectitude: to this, therefore, we are conſtantly obliged to be conformed. And the ultimate *intereſt* of the agent in being virtuous, is final *happineſs*. Hence we learn, that *perſonal happineſs* is the *end*, reſult, termination, or *conſequent* of virtue; that divine rectitude is the rule or *ſtandard* of it; and that *divine equity* is the *obliging power*. To ſeek happineſs, therefore, to the neglect of pure virtue, is to fail of the end we propoſe; that is, to be finally miſerable: and what *obliges* the agent to abide by *this* conſequence, is *divine equity*, which conſiſts in giving to the agent his *due*.

§ 14. (II.) SCRIPTURAL THEOLOGY. The importance of juſt views of Equity and Sovereignty, in reference to the *Calviniſtic* and *Arminian* ſyſtems, appears from the profeſſed examination of them in the preceding pages. But if I miſtake not, they are of equal importance in appreciating the merits of *other theological ſyſtems*, and in adjuſting a great number of ſubordinate controverted points. I ſhall mention a few, by way of ſpecimen.

"The *Antinomians*," according to MOSHEIM, "are a more rigid kind of Calviniſts, who pervert CALVIN's doctine of *abſolute decrees* to the worſt purpoſes, by drawing from it concluſions highly detrimental to the intereſts of true religion and virtue. Several of the Antinomians (for they are not all preciſely of the ſame mind,) look upon it as unneceſſary in Chriſtian miniſters to exhort their flocks

flocks to a virtuous practice, and a pious obedience to the divine law, ſince they whom GOD has elected to ſalvation, by an eternal and immutable decree, will, by the *irreſiſtible* impulſe of divine grace, be led to the practice of piety and virtue; while thoſe who are doomed, by a divine decree, to eternal puniſhment, will never be engaged by any exhortations or admonitions, how affecting ſoever they may be, to a virtuous courſe; nor have they it in their power to obey the divine law, when the ſuccours of divine grace are withheld from them. From theſe principles, they concluded, that the miniſters of the goſpel diſcharged ſufficiently their paſtoral functions, when they inculcated the neceſſity of *faith in Chriſt*, and proclaimed the bleſſings of the new covenant to their people."—"Another, and a ſtill more hideous form of Antinomianiſm is —That as the *elect* cannot fall from grace, nor forfeit the divine favour, ſo it follows, that the wicked actions they commit, and the violations of the divine law with which they are chargeable, are not *really ſinful*, nor are to be conſidered as inſtances of their departing from the law of GOD; and that conſequently they have no occaſion either to confeſs their ſins, or to break them off by repentance. Thus adultery, for example, in one of the *elect*, though it appear *ſinful* in the ſight of men, and be conſidered univerſally as an enormous violation of the divine law, yet is not a *ſin* in the ſight of GOD, becauſe it is one of the eſſential and diſtinctive characters of the elect, that they cannot

do any thing which is either diſpleaſing to GOD, or prohibited by the law."*

§ 15. Who ſees not that tenets like thoſe now recited, can have no place except in minds totally ignorant of the divine character, as equitable in moral government, while ſovereign in divine grace. Their whole ſyſtem, if ſuch it may be called, reſts on the falſe principle, that ſovereign grace and moral government are incompatible. Thoſe who are *not decreed* to be ſaved, they allow, are under moral government; but thoſe who are decreed to be ſaved by grace, are not. Theſe perfections, they acknowledge, are exerciſed towards *different* perſons, but not towards the *ſame* perſons. The elect ought not to be threatened, nor the non-elect invited. Thus they make *the divine decrees the rule of human actions.* But it has been proved, in the former part of this work, that divine government is founded in *equity*, and divine grace in *ſovereignty*; and that both perfections reſpect man in his two-fold capacity, as free, and as paſſive. Now, to give the leaſt colour of conſiſtency to their ſcheme, they ought to ſhew, that the *elect*, as ſuch, are not *free*, not moral agents, but *merely* the paſſive recipients of grace; and conſequently, that on *them* GOD has no claim of moral ſervice: and at the ſame time, it is incumbent on them to prove that, for want of grace, the *non-elect* are not *obliged* to be *holy*, or, which is the ſame thing, to perform any act in a *ſpiritual* manner. The elect, they acknowledge, are

* MOSH. Eccles. Hiſt. Cent. xvii. ſect. 11. Part 11. ch. ii. § 25.

are obliged to ſpiritual obedience, *becauſe* they *have* grace; and others are not obliged, *becauſe* they *have not* grace. Thus they make *ſovereignty the ground of obligation* to the elect, and the *meaſure of miniſterial conduct*; and *equity* the ground of obligation to the non-elect! and thereby prove their moſt conſummate ignorance of the character both of GOD and man. There is no end to their inconſiſtencies and contradictions. Their fundamental error ſprings from their falſe and abſurd notions of moral obligation.

§ 16. The *goſpel call*, according to their unſcriptural fancy, ſhould not be directed to the unconverted, as they are not *able* to repent and believe in a *ſpiritual* manner; for, ſay they, ſhould we require of men *impoſſibilities?* Thus they make a *holy principle* the *ground* of obligation; and the want of it, a diſcharge. And thus alſo, with ſingular inconſiſtency, they agree with the Arminians, that obligation ariſes from *inward* ability, and not from the freedom of the agent, in connection with objective means; the abſurdity of which, it is preſumed, has been ſufficiently proved, in the preceding examination of Arminianiſm.

§ 17. To the Antinomians, above all people in the world, is this charge applicable, that they "hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs." They do indeed hold moſt precious and important truths; ſuch as GOD's abſolute decrees, and eternal election,—the ſovereignty of grace, and its irreſiſt-

ible efficacy,—faith being the gift of GOD,—the genuine tendency of free grace to produce grateful obedience,—the perſeverance of the ſaints,—and, in general, all the bleſſings and privileges of the everlaſting covenant between the Father and the Son. But alas! they hold theſe truths in *unrighteouſneſs*, becauſe they draw from them the moſt iniquitous inferences. For inſtance; from the doctrine of abſolute decrees, they infer that GOD has decreed *ſin* as well as holineſs,—that *in* an *elect* perſon, GOD beholds no ſin, but *loves* him in the days of his folly, blaſphemy, rebellion, guilt and impurity, in the *very ſame ſenſe* as after he is made by grace poor in ſpirit, meek, merciful, and pure in heart; yea, that he loves a debauchee in a brothel, or an aſſaſſin in the act of murder, *becauſe* he is one of the *elect*, in the ſame *ſenſe*, nay the ſame *degree*, as when called, juſtified, waſhed and glorified! Their *deſign*, I allow, is to exalt the freeneſs, the ſovereignty, the ſtrength, the unchangeableneſs, and the unparalleled greatneſs of divine love. But for want of underſtanding the reſpective natures and influence of Equity and Sovereignty, according to divine revelation, they utterly fail of accompliſhing their deſign, and miſerably deceive both themſelves and others.—From the glorious truth of the *irreſiſtible* efficacy of divine *grace*, they prepoſterouſly infer that educational endeavours and perſuaſive addreſſes to the *unconverted* to repent and believe, are not only uſeleſs, but alſo a mark of unſoundneſs in the faith!—Becauſe *faith* is the *gift of God*, they waywardly

waywardly gather, that *believing* is not a ſinner's *duty*; as if there were ſome inconſiſtency between theſe facts. Some of them indeed allow, that every ſinner is obliged to *love* GOD, but not to *believe* in Chriſt; becauſe the one is required by the *law*, the other only by the *goſpel*: for the law has to do with the non-elect, but the goſpel with predeſtinated ſinners excluſively! Thus they muſt appear, to every one who is acquainted with the Equity and Sovereignty of GOD, in their reſpective operations, moſt wretchedly defective in their knowledge of a very important part of divine truth.—They juſtly aſſert that the genuine *tendency* of *grace*, is to produce grateful obedience; but then they perverſely conclude, that the law—the rule of right—is no *directory* to the believer: As if the promiſe and the law, divine government and grace, were not only different, but *oppoſite* to each other. But is the law againſt the promiſes of GOD? Does the grace of GOD ſubvert his government? *Grace* and *our works*, indeed, as the *ground* of acceptance with GOD, are *incompatible*; but they are not ſo, as *effects* found in the ſame perſon,—the one ſovereignly imparted, the other equitably required. There is a *ſenſe*, a very important ſenſe, in which the ſubjects of grace are not under the law: but perverſeneſs, and ignorance of GOD, of his perfections, and of his covenants, muſt ſurely combine to draw the inference, that a *believer* is not, *in any ſenſe*, the ſubject of divine law, or *obliged* to be conformed to the rule of right. Does the Antinomian boaſt in the precious doc-

trine of *Perſeverance?* He does well. But how miſchievous the inference, that our own endeavours to perſevere are *uſeleſs*, or that we are not bound in duty to "work out our own ſalvation with fear and trembling."

§ 18. He who has a juſt conception of the character of GOD, and the relation he bears to mankind in general, or to ſaints in particular, as a GOD of grace and of juſtice, cannot embrace the *Sandemanian* principle, That *ſaving faith* conſiſts exclufively in a *ſimple aſſent* to the divine teſtimony concerning Jeſus Chriſt. The ſovereign GOD, in the perſon of the ſurety, beſtows the *ſpirit of faith;* without which there can be neither a ſimple aſſent, nor any thing elſe deſerving of the honourable appellation of *faith:* and wherever that divine principle exiſts, there alſo will be found, as occaſion offers, conſent, affiance, reception, or appropriation, no leſs than ſimple aſſent. This laſt, in its higheſt import, is only *one fruit* of the ſpirit of faith, which is not more of a ſaving nature than other exerciſes of the ſame divine principle. *If* the ſimple aſſent flow from the work of the ſpirit, it is granted that ſalvation is connected with it; and ſo it is with love to GOD, to Chriſt, to the brethren, &c. The diſpute therefore, agitated by Sandemanians concerning faith, is merely *verbal.* Granting that faith, in ſtrictneſs, is nothing more than *ſimple aſſent*, it is not *ſaving*, to the *excluſion* of hope and love, holy fear, and penitential ſorrow. For though we are *juſtified* by faith, in the ſcripture

ſcripture ſenſe, excluſively; we are not therefore *finally ſaved* by it, *irreſpectively* of other graces. If this view of faith be more valuable than any other, it muſt conſiſt in the ſuppoſed *eaſe* with which a perſon may become a Chriſtian. But is it a mighty acquiſition, to become better verſed in the meaning of a *word*, in order to find an eaſy way of being a Chriſtian; while, at the ſame time, the Chriſtianity thus acquired is no more an evidence of a *ſaving ſtate*, than any other exerciſe of the divine life! What does the divine governor equitably require? Is it ſimple aſſent alone? Is this the *whole* of a juſt claim in order to final ſalvation? The abſurdity is too glaring. In this repreſentation of ſaving faith, there ſeems to be a ſtrong, though ſubtle, ſpice of *legality*, under a pretence of eaſe and ſimplicity. While the formal phariſee requires *much labour* in order to acceptance, the advocate of GLASS and SANDEMAN requires but *very little*; a little *ſimple aſſent*, and and all the required work is done.—I fear, the difference between theſe is not in *kind*, but in *degree*; not as *work* differs from *grace*, but, as *much* work differs from *little* work. For a *ſimple aſſent* is a *work*, an act of the human mind, no leſs truly than truſt, reliance, confidence, or any other branch of obedience. He who expects to be *ſaved* by a *ſimple aſſent* to Jeſus as the Son of GOD, may as well expect the ſame by his exerciſe of *love* to GOD and man, or to the Saviour. —The one is no more of divine appointment and requiſition than the other. Is not condemnation

pronounced on the *want of love*, as well as on the want of faith?

§ 19. In the light of theſe revealed principles, we may diſcern the folly of *Pelagianiſm*. Confined in their view of GOD's character, Pelagians aſcribe to him *government* only, to the utter excluſion of ſubjective grace; and equity, to the excluſion of *ſovereignty* in our acceptation of this term—And, equally confined in their views of man's real character, both as a creature and as a ſinner, they aſcribe to him *active* power, to the excluſion of *paſſive*; a perfect ability to keep the divine law, even in the preſent fallen ſtate, to the excluſion of divine influence.—I hope it has been fairly ſhewn, that ſuch views are no leſs contrary to true philoſophy, than to the uniform tenor of the ſacred oracles.—Were it not that the Pelagian leaven imperceptibly inſinuates itſelf into the minds of perſons profeſſing orthodoxy, they could not maintain what they do reſpecting either the preſent or the priſtine ability of man. They are ever confounding that kind of ability which is the baſis of moral obligation, with another kind which is the immediate cauſe of a virtuous determination of the will. They juſtly contend that man has ability to make his own elections without control; but how abſurd the inference that therefore he has no need of ſubjective grace, in order to render the moral means efficacious, and his character truly virtuous! Some perſons indeed have acknowledged, "that none could *perſevere* or *advance* in

a holy or virtuous courſe, without the perpetual ſupport, and the powerful aſſiſtance of divine grace;" and yet, with ſingular inconſiſtency, they maintained "that *inward preventing grace* was not neceſſary to form in the ſoul the *firſt beginnings* of true repentance."* That is, they could *make*, but not *keep* themſelves Chriſtians! They could *create*, but not *preſerve* the divine life! It is the property of error to be inconſiſtent with firſt principles.

§ 20. For want of accurate notions reſpecting the nature of moral government, ſome writers, who are claſſed amongſt the moſt orthodox, and among the diſſenters too, have egregiouſly erred reſpecting the *kingdom of Chriſt*.—They ſeem to make *ſubjects* and *obedient ſubjects*, ſynonimous; and to identify Chriſt's offices of *King* and *Surety*, referring each alike excluſively to the elect. This fancy confounds the equity of the Meſſiah's *government* with the victorious power of his *grace*; his regal *authority* with his munificent *bounty*; actual *obedience* with *obligation* to obey; the *internal* form of the covenant of grace, with its *external* adminiſtration; a profeſſing church with Chriſt's myſtical body: Whereas "the kingdom of heaven," or the kingdom of Chriſt, has *bad* ſubjects which are to be *puniſhed*, as well as good ones to be *rewarded*; *unprofitable* ſervants who know their maſter's will, but do it not; *ſlothful* ſervants who hide their talent; uſeleſs *tares* that ſhall be burned; things that *offend*, and them

* Mosh. Eccl. Hiſt. Cent. v. Part ii. ch. v. § 26.

them which do iniquity. The kingdom of Chriſt, properly ſpeaking, is compoſed of ſubjects whom he governs; but to ſuppoſe grace in the ſoul to be a neceſſary baſis for governing a moral kingdom, as that of Chriſt evidently is, according to ſcripture facts and aſſertions; or to ſuppoſe that his government commences with a ſpiritual power in converſion; is nothing better than a dangerous fiction, or a limb of pernicious Antinomianiſm, under the garb of righteouſneſs.

It is a precious truth, that Chriſt has a *ſpiritual* kingdom; that he makes his people willing in the day of his power; rules in their hearts here, and beſtows upon them a kingdom hereafter. But to call theſe *excluſively* "the kingdom of Chriſt," is juſt as proper as it would be to give the appellation of "kingdom of Great Britain" to a few of the King's favourites, to the excluſion of all others, whether infants or adults. Are none *ſubjects* of Meſſiah's reign but thoſe who know their king and the nature of his dominion? who enjoy his ſpecial favour? who bow to his authority, and obey his laws? No one can ſuppoſe it but from extreme inattention to the government of Chriſt, and the proper nature of his kingdom.

§ 21. From the principles explained in this book, we may ſee the propriety of the goſpel *call*, and the divine ſincerity of gracious *invitations*. Calls and invitations, as well as commands, are *moral means* employed by the divine governor in reference to his creatures as free in their acts, and accountable

accountable for their conduct. He who denies the propriety and utility of ſuch means, even towards the non-elect, proves his ignorance of a moral ſyſtem, and the operations reſpectively of government and grace. He who knows the character of GOD and the nature of man, muſt alſo know, that theſe means are eſſential to produce *obedience* and the *fruits* of the Spirit. Though invitations, perſuaſions, and expoſtulations, when *alone*, never prevail in begetting faith, repentance, and ſpiritual obedience; yet, even ſovereign ſubjective grace, *without* them, never ſucceeds to effect theſe ends. Moral *means* form an eſſential part of that *motive* by which the ſoul is determined to good, no leſs than the ſubjective *grace* by which they are found effectual. In order to ſhew that ſuch means are irrelevant, it is incumbent on the objector to prove, that the non-elect are not *capable* of acting according to motive, not ſubjects of equitable government, nor amenable to GOD as the righteous Judge!

§ 22. Here we may ſee the true ground of that well known diſtinction between the law as a *covenant*, and the ſame law as a *rule*. The very idea of a *divine covenant* implies ſovereign favour; but not ſo a divine rule. The former, therefore, ſtands related to the Sovereignty, the latter to the Equity of GOD. When the favour is forfeited by breach of covenant, the rule continues invariably the ſame. The denial of this diſtinction argues that the objector is unacquainted with the real import and relative

relative influence of government and grace, in reference to Adam and his poſterity.

§ 23. Many controverſies have been agitated, in different ages, under different names and forms, concerning grace and merit. But what have they been differing about? The one party has been ſtrenuous to advance the honour of ſovereign grace, the other to eſtabliſh the claims of equitable government. On both ſides, the principle *ſeems* to have been too much aſſumed, that the ſyſtem oppoſed, was *wholly* falſe. This was ſtrikingly the caſe with reſpect to the doctrines of the *divine decrees*, of *ſcientia media*, of *redemption*, *juſtification*, and *regeneration*. But if the principles of this Eſſay be admitted, reſpecting the characters of GOD and the creature, the truth may be found in a medium between two falſe extremes. For inſtance, the truth reſpecting the *divine decrees* may be found by allowing that thoſe concerning *good* come under one conſideration, and are as *abſolute* as any can wiſh them to be; while *ſuppoſed* ones concerning metaphyſical and moral *evil*, which have given juſt offence, appear to have no real exiſtence. The ſame is applicable to the conteſt about *ſcientia media*. The *good* is foreſeen *becauſe decreed*, and it is not poſſible for it to ſpring from any other ſource; but the *evils*, both moral and metaphyſical, are foreſeen through a *medium* of each reſpectively. Metaphyſical evil is viewed in the glaſs of hypothetical exiſtence; as no created exiſtence *can* be without it: and moral evil in the medium of its *deficient*

deficient cauſe united with free will, which fully accounts for its exiſtence *without* a decree. On theſe principles, to the one party is allowed all the ſovereignty in divine grace that he can wiſh; to the other all the equity in the divine government which he can deſire; and both in perfect harmony. Hence none are ſaved by good works foreſeen, whether faith, repentance, or any other; and none are condemned for ſin fore-appointed. And hence alſo, the ſaints are *judged* according to their works, while yet they are *ſaved* by grace—According to his mercy GOD ſaveth us; yet ſalvation as the end is obtained by obedience as the way. Sovereignty worketh all our works within us; and then we both will and do what the moral governor demands.

§ 24. Were we better verſed in theſe grand principles, the conteſt about *redemption*, whether it be *particular* or *univerſal*, would ſoon be at an end. For the *work* of Chriſt, conſidered as a *mean* of divine government, muſt needs be of equal extent with any *other* mean. Thus his incarnation, his obedience, the doctrines he revealed, the pains he endured, his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion are all *public acts*, and the ground of encouragement for all returning ſinners. They were capable of neither abridgment nor enlargement. They were neceſſary, had there been but one elected; yet ſufficient, were all to be ſaved. But the ſame work of Chriſt, as a part of the Sovereign decree, becomes operative only in the minds of thoſe who, according to election, have ſubjective grace. They receive the atone-

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ment and reconciliation; the bleſſing exhibited becomes perſonal, effective, and ſaving. As the *love* of GOD has both an *exhibited*, and an *energetic* aſpect, proceeding from the two fold character of GOD with reference to man; ſo, the obedience and ſufferings of Chriſt have the ſame diverſity. The *general aſpect*, whether of the love and grace of GOD, or the humiliation, obedience, ſufferings and voluntary death of Chriſt, is an *exhibition* of a ſuitable good to moral agents; but the *particular aſpect* of the very ſame things is an *effect* to be produced by them in certain perſons according to the order of a ſovereign purpoſe. Hence the preaching of Chriſt crucified, or the proclamation of his divine righteouſneſs, tho' addreſſed to all alike who hear them, produces a ſaving effect only on the ſubjects of ſovereign grace. ALL are alike *obliged in equity and intereſt*, to receive the announced benefits; but SOME only are found *actually diſcharging* that obligation, and eternally praiſing the ſovereignty of divine grace for making them to differ.

§ 25. Theſe principles are well calculated to explain ſome difficulties which attend the doctrine of *Juſtification*. That the ſubject is attended with difficulties, no intelligent perſon, who has read and thought upon it, can queſtion. If not aware of them, let him conſult, for inſtance, BAXTER and TILLOTSON, on the one hand; AMES, TURRETIN, OWEN, GILL, and EDWARDS, on the other; and he will ſoon find conſiderable difficulties. This is

particularly

particularly the caſe in aſſigning to *faith* its proper office, and in reconciling the apoſtolic ſtatements of Paul and James. But if we duly conſider that a two-fold relation ſubſiſts between GOD, and his choſen, that of a ſovereign decreer, and that of an equitable governor, the chief difficulty diſappears.—In the firſt of theſe eſſential characters with reſpect to us, (though in *equity* to Chriſt) he imputes righteouſneſs without works—we are juſtified freely by grace—or by Chriſt,—wherein we are the paſſive recipients of benefits. Thus he covers our ſins, and blots them out for his *own ſake*, without any condition on our part. The baſis of Juſtification is *union of perſons*, and that union which is a ſufficient ground for the gracious act of juſtifying, is formed by the Covenant Head, the Lord our righteouſneſs, as an act of ſovereignty, in the time appointed, even the day of his power. As the baſis of the impetration of new-covenant bleſſings, of pardon by atonement, and righteouſneſs by obedience, is the UNION of the Saviour's *Perſon* with *our nature*; ſo, *that* of the application of theſe bleſſings is the UNION of his *nature* with *our perſons*. By the union implied in his incarnation, a foundation is laid for preſerving our *nature* from eternal ruin, by his dwelling in that nature *perſonally*: but by the quickening union which takes place on a *perſonal change*, a foundation is laid for preſerving our perſons unto eternal happineſs. By the one he aſſumed our *nature*, by the other our *perſons*. By the former he removes the *law* enmity, by the latter the *heart* enmity.

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In the firſt inſtance, he fulfilled the covenanted condition of making *himſelf* the ſon of man; in the laſt, that of making *us* the ſons of God. The one is a *common* ſalvation, the other an *elective* one. On the one is founded his calls to evangelical faith and repentance; on the other his beſtowment of righteouſneſs, holineſs, and everlaſting life.

§ 26. On the other hand, as a *governor* God requires *obedience*; and thus forgiveneſs and *Juſtification* are held forth in a conditional form. This is the language of rectoral propriety; "Except ye *repent*, ye ſhall *periſh*"—"he that believeth not ſhall be condemned." This equitable conduct is founded in the *relation* itſelf of government and free agency, and not in mere poſitive appointment. Juſtification being founded, as before obſerved, on the union of perſons, the bond on the *agent's* part is *faith*, or believing, whereby the ſoul receives Chriſt and all his benefits, and becomes as one with him; aſſenting to his meſſiahſhip, on the teſtimony of the goſpel record, approving of him in the whole of his perſon and work, and *truſting* in him for life and ſalvation. Terms, or conditions, have no place in the execution of ſovereign decrees, or the communication of benefits, becauſe man is then conſidered as *paſſive*, and the recipient of benefits; but they are eſſential to moral government, becauſe man, the ſubject of government, is regarded as a *free agent*. This double relation between God and man, belongs to every period of human exiſtence. The conditional aſpect of the old

old covenant was, "Do this, and live;" i. e. perform *perfect obedience* to the divine requisition, and it will be followed with happiness. But the conditional aspect of the gospel testimony is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Much debate has been occasioned by the supposition, that, because faith and repentance are privileges and blessings of the covenant of grace, they cannot in any respect be terms or conditions to be performed by us. But the same thing may be a *blessing* freely bestowed, in one respect, while an incumbent *duty* in another; a blessing in its *principle*, and a duty in its *exercise*. The principle, or spiritual nature, is a sovereign gift; but its exercise is equitably required of the agent.

§ 27. Hence it is plain, that as the divine governor justly claimed from Adam, in his primæval state, *unfailing obedience*, as a condition of happiness; so, with equal justice, he now requires the *obedience of faith*. But what is *faith*, in the business of Justification? Opinions here are innumerable;—a grace of the Spirit, a moral duty, an instrument, a natural fitness, its object metonymically expressed, &c. Towards a satisfactory answer to the question, it may be useful to remark, that *believing* in order to justification, is what the moral Governor, according to the present dispensation, *requires*; and which the accountable agent *performs*. Now what is required in this case by the one party, and performed by the other, must needs be a work, or moral duty. And if *unbelief*

be a *bad work*, it ſhould ſeem that *believing* is a *good work*. Again, if faith exerciſed, or believing, connected with its object, be not conſidered as a *good work*, in the buſineſs of juſtification, while it is entitled to that character in every other buſineſs, there ought to be ſome ſtrong neceſſity for ſo ſingular, not to ſay unintelligible diſtinction. But there is *no neceſſity* for it, while we have only accurate apprehenſions of the divine character.

In juſtification three things are implied, a *charge* made—a *plea* offered—and the juſtifying *ſentence*. If the charge be, that the perſon has, in our common progenitor, deviated from *original rectitude*, by a breach of covenant; it is plain, that no *work* of ours can be urged as a plea: Chriſt alone, as the ſecond Adam, can meet it on our behalf, and give us the privilege of pleading it.—But if the *charge* be, that, notwithſtanding the goſpel remedy, the perſon continues an unbeliever, impenitent, and diſobedient to the heavenly call: it is equally plain, that the only admiſſible plea, in anſwer to this charge, is believing, repenting, obedience. The Surety's fulfilment of all righteouſneſs, in our behalf, was not to *excuſe* us from performing, but to *enable* us to perform *theſe* equitable requiſitions. Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, the fruit of ſovereign grace, are exhibited in the goſpel as objective bleſſings for our uſe; our ſuitable improvement of them is juſtly *required* by the divine governor; and in every inſtance of actual compliance, or of the *condition performed*, ſovereign grace is the immediate as well as the original cauſe of

of it. Unbelief excludes from all the benefits of the goſpel, and leaves the ſinner under the condemnation of a broken covenant, and his own perſonal tranſgreſſions. On the contrary, faith introduces into all the benefits of the goſpel, as pleadable by the believer; while it is the *fruit* of that vital union with Chriſt which he effects in ſovereign love, but the *root* of that which is required of us in equity. What Chriſt has done and ſuffered, as performed by him in our behalf, is imputed for our juſtification, when he effects an union between himſelf, who is a quickening Spirit, and our perſons. But he did not ſo believe, repent, and obey for us, as to excuſe us from theſe acts, becauſe GOD does not reſign his character of governor, while he conducts himſelf towards his people with the exerciſe of ſovereign favour.

§ 28. In order therefore to be extricated from ſeveral, I may ſay innumerable difficulties, attendant on the doctrine of Juſtification, we ſhould remember that GOD maintains the character of a gracious ſovereign, and a juſt governor. In the latter character, he deals with us by moral means and conditions; in the former, he proceeds according to the counſel of his own will, and the internal form of his covenant. In purſuance of a *ſovereign* covenant and plan of redemption, GOD requires, not from us but from the Surety, the performance of conditions, which are virtually included in theſe two things; viz. the *impetration* of righteouſneſs

and life, and the *impartation* of his quickening Spirit, whereby a vital union is formed, active rebellion ſubdued, and enmity ſlain. To ſuch a ſoul, being thus in Chriſt Jeſus, there is, there *can* be no condemnation. In *foro cæli*, the perſon ſtands complete in the Surety. The enmity of the law againſt the offender, and that of the offender againſt the law, are alike annihilated. And, in this reſpect, the *imputation* of righteouſneſs, reſulting from union, is declared in heaven; and the participation of life, the ſpirit of faith, of repentance, and of holineſs, is the inſeparable attendant in the perſon ſo circumſtanced. This is juſtification *freely by grace*, through the redemption which is in Chriſt Jeſus, to the utter excluſion of all our perſonal works. Yet,

§ 29. In purſuance of the plan of moral government, GOD's elect have duties and obligations as well as others. They have equal cauſe to enquire, What ſhall we do to be ſaved? And this is the work of GOD, that they believe on Jeſus Chriſt for preſent acceptance and eternal ſalvation; that they accept pardon, righteouſneſs, purity and bliſs, as a free gift, "without money, and without price." Performing this required condition, actively aſſenting to the truth, and actually believing with the heart, they are declared to be juſtified from all thoſe charges that appear againſt the *unbelieving*, who reject the counſel of GOD when propoſed to them. Hence we ſee the conſiſtency between Paul and James. Paul, when diſcuſſing the

the queſtion, *How a man*, whether Jew or Gentile, *is to be accepted of God?* aſſerts, that we muſt obtain the invaluable bleſſing, not by perſonal obedience to the law, whether ceremonial or moral, but by *faith;* that is, by aſſenting to, and confiding in him who performed both. But, ſays James, it muſt be an *operative* faith; a faith that brings forth fruit unto GOD, and brings in its train all other graces and works of righteouſneſs. For though GOD, as a ſovereign diſpenſer of benefits, ſets us at liberty from condemnation, and gives us a title to life, on a condition performed by Jeſus Chriſt, he has not thrown away the reins of his government, or ceaſed to require a condition in order to acquit us of a charge of rejecting his truth propoſed to us as moral agents, and in order to confer on us his promiſed benefit.

§ 30. The doctrine of ſcriptural *regeneration* may be conſiderably relieved from the difficulties in which it has been involved, by a proper attention to theſe principles. As an equitable governor, GOD *requires* "truth in the inward parts," perfect conformity to his revealed will, repentance, faith, and new obedience. But as a ſovereign, he takes away the heart of ſtone, gives a heart of fleſh, and beſtows "the law of the Spirit of life." If by regeneration be meant, a *new nature communicated*, we are the paſſive recipients of it; but if by the ſame term be meant the formation of the *body of Chriſtian graces*, as a new man conformable to Chriſt our exemplar, it reſults from

this *new nature* exerciſed on *the word of truth.* Hence we may ſee the fallacy of that ſtatement which maintains that GOD does not require evangelical or *ſpiritual* obedience from the unregenerate; for if as a governor he did not *require* this, why ſhould he as a benevolent and operative ſovereign *effect* the change? Is it conceivable, that he ſhould *produce* what is not *required?* Becauſe all men are *obliged*, in equity and intereſt, to be conformable to eternal rectitude, therefore, ſays the gracious diſpenſer of covenant bleſſings, mine elect ſhall be "quickened together with Chriſt," and made pure in heart, that they may be bleſſed for ever. It is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that he ſhould *beſtow* what is not equitably *requiſite* for them to poſſeſs, in order to be happy.

§ 31. Theſe views of GOD and of moral agents, will aſſiſt us to form a judgment on the controverſy excited about the middle of the laſt century, between ſome eminent writers of our own country and ſeveral American divines, concerning *the way of ſalvation.* I particularly allude to Mr. HERVEY and Dr. BELLAMY, and the authors to whom they refer. This is not the place to enter at large into that controverſy; but we may obſerve, that Mr. HERVEY ſeems to argue on the fact of *objective* grace, Chriſt and his benefits, under the notion of a *ſovereign grant*, which in *that* ſenſe is ours *before* faith; and on our complying with the goſpel call, it becomes ours in *ſubjective* poſſeſſion. But if the terms "*ours*" and "*mine*," which often occur,

occur, be taken by one to ſignify a warrant, or ground of *right to receive* and appropriate the bleſſing; and by the other, actual and ſaving poſſeſſion, the difference is nearly verbal. Without attempting to vindicate every expreſſion of HERVEY, or his favourite MARSHALL, every competent and candid judge muſt acknowledge, if I miſtake not, that the doctrine they eſpouſed is reducible to theſe particulars:

1. That the goſpel, and the glorious benefits it contains, are a *ſtream* of ſovereign love and mercy conſtantly *flowing* towards periſhing ſinners, which would bleſs the moſt undeſerving, were it not for their *criminal rejection* of the propoſed benefits. In other words; that the goſpel meſſage is an *emanation* from the Father of lights, as the GOD of grace, *ſhining* upon a benighted world, wherever a diſpenſation of evangelic truth is witneſſed—an emanation that conveys righteouſneſs and healing, that deſtroys the power of ſin, enkindles holy love, and beatifies the ſoul for ever,—where there is not a ſinful reſiſtance, or an *active oppoſition* to its avowed deſign. And this appears to be the meaning of Dr. OWEN on Heb. iii. 7—11. (Abridgem. § 19.)

2. That, as theſe benefits are great and free, it i at once the high privilege and incumbent duty of every ſinner to whom theſe tidings are made known, inſtantly to *receive* the teſtimony and the thing teſtified; and that every one, at his peril, is bound to lay aſide his criminal reſiſtance, and to admit this healing beam, this ſtream of righteouſ-

neſs and ſalvation, as his *own*; as deſigned for his uſe, and which he may poſſeſs as a treaſure of ſalvation and happineſs by a believing appropriation.

3. That, notwithſtanding this, it is the ſovereign, ſecret, infallible influence of the Holy Spirit alone, which does *in fact* produce a radical and ſaving change in the ſoul. It is by this influence that we come to *diſcover* the glory of the goſpel, *and by* neceſſary implication the glory of the *law*, as holy, juſt, and good, even when condemning its tranſgreſſor. It is alſo by the ſame influence, that the ſoul comes to diſcover its own guilt, impotency, defilement, wretchedneſs, and expoſure to endleſs miſery. The ſame organ, and the ſame light, diſcover to us, in different objects, the beautiful, the grand, and the deformed; the rainbow and the thunder-cloud. To diſpute, therefore, which object we *ſee*, or *ought* to ſee *firſt*, is little better than trifling. Surely that object is actually *firſt ſeen* by an enlightened mind, which is *firſt preſented* to it, whether law or goſpel, juſtice or mercy, GOD's holineſs, or Chriſt's merits. By degrees, the relative importance of each appears.

4. That the *faith* by which we ſtand acquitted from the charge of unbelief, and become partakers of it and all his benefits, according to the plan of legiſlative requiſition, is a *reception* of the teſtimony and the bleſſings announced by it. And it ſeems to be implied, that he who really receives Chriſt and his benefits muſt be *conſcious* of his own act, and the ſincerity of his acceptance. Hence their

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view of juſtifying faith, or faith required in order to juſtification, may be expreſſed by a *conſcious reception* of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, for pardon and acceptance.

§ 32. If the above ſtatement be accurate, the ſtate of the difference between theſe writers is to this effect: The goſpel regards man as deſerving to periſh, and without ſtrength. By reaſon of *objective grace*, that bringeth ſalvation, and appeareth to ſinners without reſpect to perſons, *every* ſinner *may* truly ſay, Chriſt is *mine* already as the gift of GOD, by way of *grant*, and will be mine in ſaving *poſſeſſion*, IF I do not *reject* him by unbelief. And if the actual reception, (I mean an intelligent and voluntary reception) of a proffered benefit includes a *conſciouſneſs* of the act; it follows, that what was before only *hypothetically* true, becomes on believing *actually* ſo. But from what was true in the former ſenſe, no man can infer, by the aid of the ſcriptures, of his ſenſes, or of his reaſon, what is true in the latter ſenſe. From neither of theſe great ſources of information, can any man learn, whether he is a *conſcious receiver* of exhibited bleſſings. Nor ſhould it be ſought from *any other* ſource prior to, or diſtinct from, the exerciſe of faith, whether Chriſt be "ours" in a ſubjective ſenſe. The reaſon is, that the change from one kind of poſſeſſion to the other, depends on the fulfilment of a condition reſulting from the ſecret will of GOD, begetting the ſpirit of faith; and which

which therefore, with reſpect to man, muſt needs be a contingent event.

If preciſion in the uſe of terms be required, I do not think that the following language of Mr. MARSHALL is defenſible. "Let it be well obſerved, that the reaſon why we are to aſſure ourſelves in our faith, that GOD freely giveth Chriſt and his ſalvation to us particularly, is not, becauſe it is a truth before we believe it, but becauſe it becometh a certain truth when we believe it, and becauſe it will never be true, except we do, in ſome meaſure, perſuade and aſſure ourſelves that it is ſo. We have no abſolute promiſe or declaration in ſcripture, that GOD certainly will or doth give Chriſt and his ſalvation to any one of us in particular; neither do we know it to be true already by ſcripture, or ſenſe, or reaſon, before we aſſure ourſelves abſolutely of it."* But, though it is not my buſineſs to vindicate Mr. MARSHALL in this paſſage, where preciſion of terms and perſpicuity of meaning are ſo much wanted; it is hoped I may, without giving offence to any, attempt to explain his meaning, according to the tenor of his diſcourſe and his general ſyſtem, on ſo important and intereſting a ſubject.

1. This author, who, if we regard the general tendency of his work on Sanctification, is ſo deſervedly celebrated by Mr. HERVEY, ſuppoſes, that "GOD freely giveth Chriſt and his ſalvation to us," in general, by the ſcriptural declaration. This, he allows, is a truth before we believe it, and is given us

* MARSHALL on Sanctification, p. 158, ed. 1780.

us as a teſtimony that we might believe it. But, he alſo ſuppoſes, that

2. It is not a truth, that GOD giveth conſcious *actual poſſeſſion* of it and his ſalvation, *before* faith; nor is there any evidence that it is *thus* ours in particular, but what ariſes from faith itſelf, or a conſcious reception of him. Therefore, it is inferred,

3. When the ſoul has received Chriſt and his benefits, a fact exiſts for which there could not have been, to the perſon, any prior evidence. The evidence ariſes from the fact of an exiſting condition in the ſoul; and that is nothing elſe but faith, or a conſcious reception of the bleſſing. For, IF Chriſt is given to us in the goſpel, in order that we may enjoy him in our ſouls; or, IF, by receiving him as propoſed, he becomes ours in particular; it follows, that a conſcious receiving of him produces a new relation, a new fact, for which we neither had, nor could have, any prior evidence.

4. Hence it follows, that Chriſt *thus* given, that is, in actual participation, was not a truth *before* believing, but becomes a truth *by* believing. For this conſcious reception is that very means by which the conditional propoſition becomes an abſolute one. By regenerating grace, GOD opens the door of the heart, Chriſt and his benefits are cordially received, and conſciouſneſs of the act is its inſeparable concomitant. For though a perſon may poſſeſs the *principle* or the ſpirit of faith, without being conſcious of it; he cannot be unconſcious of his *acts* proceeding from that principle, which are directed to a ſpecific end, and which may

may be termed "believing with the heart unto righteouſneſs."

§ 33. Perhaps the principal defect in our author's repreſentation, in point of perſpicuity, which has given ſo much offence to Dr. BELLAMY and many others, is the manner in which he diverſifies his meaning by the uſe of theſe terms—"particularly," or "in particular." By a candid compariſon of one part of his work with another, and from it's general tenour, his intention by this reſtrictive clauſe is, to contraſt a *general grant* of covenant bleſſings, which are *ours before* we receive them, in *one* ſenſe; with a perſonal *poſſeſſion* of the ſame bleſſings, which makes them ours in *another* ſenſe. Whereas, inſtead of that mode of limitation and contraſt, had he ſaid, that "GOD giving Chriſt and his ſalvation as actually dwelling in our hearts, by faith, is not a truth *before* conſcious reception but becometh a certain truth *by* conſcious reception," his meaning, though the ſame, might be leſs liable to miſtake. For he conſiders faith, actually receiving Chriſt and his benefits, to be what conſtitutes the change from general to particular intereſt, and of which every believer muſt be conſcious.

The author very juſtly conſiders this as an *exception* from the common method of believing propoſitions; for which, though he does not aſſign it, there is a very good reaſon. In tranſactions among men, when a benefit is made over, as by will or charter, from one to another, on performing

performing ſome condition; that condition muſt be ſome *overt act*, by which the truſtees of ſuch will or charter may be able to aſcertain the claim. But GOD, who "regards truth in the inward parts," ſuſpends the enjoyment of the bleſſing, in the rectoral, or equitable adminiſtration of the covenant, on the *ſtate of the mind* in reference to it. Among men, if a teſtator ſhould leave an eſtate to another, on condition that the ſtate of his mind be *ſincerely* of a certain deſcription, what mortal could be a ſuitable umpire? It is therefore no wonder that, in human tranſactions, the enjoyment of a benefit is never ſuſpended on any ſuch condition. But in the matter of ſalvation from guilt, the ſcriptural propoſition is, "*If* thou believe *with thine heart*, thou ſhalt be ſaved." When a man therefore believes with the heart, he is conſcious of his own *ſincerity* in that act, as in other acts of the mind, and may by the act itſelf know his acceptance. And it is plain that there could be no *antecedent* evidence, either from ſcripture, from ſenſe, or from reaſon, or from any other ſource, of his *ſincerity* in the point of believing. If indeed he had believed that Chriſt was *his*, *poſſeſſively*, before he had a conſciouſneſs of ſincerely receiving him as held forth in the goſpel, he muſt have believed a falſehood, or at leaſt believed without adequate evidence. But conſcious ſincerity of believing is one of the beſt and higheſt evidences of perſonal religion; though there are many others, and of different kinds, to which the believer does well to take heed.

§ 34.

§ 34. Hence it appears, that thoſe who eſpouſe Dr. BELLAMY's ſide of the diſpute againſt MARSHALL and HERVEY, ought not to treat this matter ſo contemptuouſly as they ſometimes do. For, until they can produce an inſtance of a legacy among men, left to perſons on condition that the legatee *cordially accept* of it, whereby what was theirs in general becomes theirs in particular, their contempt is unjuſt, and their triumph premature. Were a purſe of gold left to a perſon on condition that he would *receive* it within a given period, during which it ſhould be daily offered him by the executors of that will, he may with truth ſay, "It is *mine by grant;*" but when he actually receives it, he can ſay, "It is *mine in poſſeſſion,*" and it became ſo by the *very act* of receiving it. "As many as received him," ſays the evangeliſt, "to them gave he power to become the ſons of GOD, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD." If therefore it be duly conſidered, that Chriſt, and in him righteouſneſs, holineſs and life eternal, are the gift of GOD to us by a teſtamentary grant, in order that whoſoever *believeth* in him, i. e. *receiveth* him, may not periſh, but have actual poſſeſſion of thoſe invaluable bleſſings; it muſt appear plain, that the fact of actual poſſeſſion was not a truth before believing, but became ſo by believing, as an appropriating, conſcious act. Believing truths revealed, in general, *irreſpectively* of juſtification, is a very different thing from believing the divine teſtimony

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in order to juſtification. A man may truly believe that there is a GOD of infinite perfections, that he himſelf is a miſerable ſinner, and that Jeſus Chriſt is the only and all-ſufficient Saviour of ruined man; but what has this kind of believing to do with juſtification? A man may *believe* the exiſtence of a will, the benevolent character of the teſtator, the legacy bequeathed, the nature of the condition preſcribed, and in ſhort "all *about* it;" but this is not *receiving* the legacy. Believing all revealed truths, as worthy of GOD and intereſting to men, is one thing: but receiving Chriſt, as the end of the law for righteouſneſs, is another. According to the one office of faith, nothing is believed but what is fact, that is, revealed, antecedent truth; according to the other office, a general conditional grant becomes a particular individual poſſeſſion. In brief, the difference between them is as great, as between receiving a legacy, and believing the contents of a will. In my apprehenſion, every other view of juſtifying faith is attended with inſuperable difficulties; particularly, is derogatory to grace, and, if traced to its juſt conſequences, tends to ſubvert the goſpel of Chriſt. For it confounds faith and works, and makes juſtification to be obtained by faith *as an act*, inſtead of a *medium*; which is plainly contrary to St. Paul's doctrine, and is too favourable to antient Jeruſalem and modern Rome. Other acts of faith, beſide this of *receiving* a free gift, however excellent in themſelves, contribute no more to our *juſtification*, than acts of love to GOD and our neighbour, or the exerciſe of fear, hope,

hope, and joy. If, indeed, the charge were directed againſt a perſon—not becauſe he is in himſelf *deſtitute of perfect righteouſneſs*, but—becauſe he does not *exerciſe the virtue* of believing the divine teſtimony, confiding in the divine faithfulneſs, and the like; it is plain, that nothing could repel ſuch a charge, but the actual production of thoſe virtuous exerciſes. But this is a very inferior ſenſe of juſtification, and is of a nature totally different from that which relates to our freedom from the condemnation of our perſons for want of perſonal perfection.

If I miſtake not, the views given in this Eſſay of the different ſcriptural acceptations of divine GRACE, as reſulting from the character of GOD and the correſponding conditions of mankind, will contribute not a little to aſcertain the line of truth, and to detect the path of error, in reference to theſe intricate points, if impartiality and candour be not violated. An accurate diſcernment of the nature of *objective grace*, with which the ſacred volume abounds, muſt recognize the *nature* of that claim, in virtue of which any perſon may ſay, "Chriſt and his benefits are *mine*." In the nature of *ſubjective grace* we perceive that ſpirit of faith, which *enables* the ſoul unfeignedly to receive the objective bleſſing. And in *required grace*, the fruit of the other two, we behold the nature of that juſtification, or pardon and acceptance, which is conſequent on believing. Againſt the charge of a *federal delinquency*, the tranſgreſſor indeed pleads the perfection of the ſecond Adam. But the ſecond Adam

Adam will be eternally perfect, whether *he* be ſaved or loſt. He muſt then plead ſomething more than the bare *objective* perfection of that righteouſneſs by an intereſt in which he is juſtified, or elſe his claims differ not from thoſe of hypocrites. For *theſe* alſo plead the *objective* excellence and ſufficiency of the Saviour's righteouſneſs. Therefore, if he would eſcape that condemnation which is due to him on account of tranſgreſſions, both federal and perſonal, he muſt plead a *conſcious union* with Chriſt by faith; or, a *conſcious reception* of him as the gift of GOD. The relative change implied in juſtification, is the immediate effect of UNION; and as the nature of the union is, ſo is the nature of the relative change. From *union by faith*, ſprings *juſtification by faith*; and from *union by Chriſt*, (effected by his Spirit, which is the ſource of the ſpirit of faith,) ſprings *juſtification by Christ*.

§ 35. (III.) PERSONAL RELIGION. Every intelligent Chriſtian will allow, that thoſe principles which have the moſt direct tendency to generate and improve perſonal religion, obviously recommend themſelves as highly important, and worthy of reception. That knowledge of GOD and of ourſelves which naturally tends to excite the believer's holy love, his filial fear, his genuine humility, his abſolute reſignation, his ardent gratitude, and his lively hope; that view of GOD and of ourſelves which is beſt calculated to ſlay our enmity, to check our preſumption, to

ſubdue our pride, and to control our impatience; thoſe aſpects of the divine character which inflexibly oppoſe rebellion, forbid deſpair, and inſpire delight;—in a word, thoſe aſpects which ward off perplexity, and induce cheerful confidence;—challenge our higheſt reverence and eſteem. In the Chriſtian character, as in the ſacred volume, and in the divine diſpenſations, it is pleaſing to recognize a beautiful ſymmetry, in which every part appears to occupy its proper ſituation, like the parts of a diſſected map, without any thing either deficient, or ſuperfluous. Such, I am perſuaded, are the genuine effects of an habitual, devout contemplation of Equity and Sovereignty, as explained in this Eſſay.

§ 36. *Holy love* is the eſſence of real virtue, and the ſum of Chriſtian holineſs. Infinite, ſovereign benevolence, habitually contemplated, enkindles the ſacred flame: all riſing enmity is ſubdued, and the ſoul eaſily embraces even its bittereſt enemies. That view of ſovereignty which has been ſometimes maintained, which wears a ſtern aſpect, and includes a deſtructive diſpoſal of its objects, inſpires us with dread rather than with affection. But, to the ſoul that ſeeks him, GOD is an ocean of light and love. The more we dwell on this bleſſed object, the more are we changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory. Love produces love. The command to love ſuch a being with all our heart, is "not grievous but joyous." And even his

his equity becomes a pleaſing theme, and the object of pureſt love. All things work together for good, to them that love GOD. His very judgments when abroad in the earth, or ſurveyed in the records of hiſtory, though awful, are yet amiable. The guilty alone are their objects; and though the "heel of the righteous" may be bruiſed by them, "their life is hid with Chriſt in GOD." Falſe apprehenſions of the divine character perplex and confound; but accurate views diſcover a lovelineſs, a ſpiritual beauty, which words are inadequate to expreſs. Divine benevolence is wonderfully operative, and inconceivably fruitful. GOD giveth his own Son and Spirit, he gives *himſelf* to be our ſalvation, and everlaſting portion. Well may Chriſtians exclaim, "What manner of love is this! We love him becauſe he firſt loved us." But the view too often indulged that GOD, by an act of *ſovereignty*, *withholds* his love, his grace, his mercy, his compaſſionate favours, is ill adapted to maintain the flame of holy affection. For my own part, I find nothing in divine *Sovereignty* but what is infinitely amiable and lovely: all beſide is *Equity*, which, though not unamiable, inſtantly leads me to enquire, with trembling ſolicitude, What am I? and what have I done?

§ 37. *Filial fear* is peculiar to a ſoul poſſeſſed of true piety; and conſiſts in an apprehenſion of power blended with benignity. So important is the "fear of the Lord" in the eſtimation of the

inſpired writers, that the *whole* of true religion is repreſented by that phraſe. Infinite greatneſs and almighty power, viewed as detached from love, may well create dread, or a "fear that hath torment;" but ſovereign benevolence, united with awful power and equity, and ſeen through the medium of revealed truth, expel the ſlaviſhneſs of fear, and induce filial affection. If we conceive ſovereign power, in any caſe, capable of doing us an *injury*, we could never be free from ſlaviſh dread; and "a horror of great darkneſs" might interrupt our pureſt enjoyments: but if, in fact, our ſpiritual enjoyments are interrupted, in connection with right views of the divine character, we may be ſure that *then* equity, not ſovereignty, is operative, and that we ſuffer nothing more than we *deſerve*. This being the caſe, the mind is awakened to ſelf-enquiry, the cauſe in *ourſelf* is diligently ſought out, and ignorance is properly lamented; and not only "preſumptuous ſins," but alſo our "ſecret faults," make us fear, and cry unto the Lord for deliverance.

§ 38. *Genuine humility* conſiſts in a juſt ſenſe entertained of ourſelves, conſidered as creatures, compared with GOD. As *repentance* ariſes from the conſideration of our *ſinfulneſs*, compared with the holineſs of GOD's law and nature; ſo *humility* ſprings from a juſt compariſon of ourſelves as *creatures*, with the ſelf-exiſtent, independent, and all-ſufficient GOD. The eſſence, exiſtence, and perfections of Jehovah are uncauſed and abſolute. He

He knoweth neither beginning nor end; neither variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning. He is before all, and above all; therefore humility is no *divine* virtue. But we are dependent upon him in all reſpects; in eſſence, in exiſtence, in active powers and good qualities. Without him we are as nothing, and can do nothing that is truly good. All our ſprings of ſufficiency are in him alone. Some may imagine, that a proper ſenſe of our ſinfulneſs, and obnoxiouſneſs to puniſhment, is a *main ingredient* as well as an *occaſion* of humility; but this is not the caſe. For the angels in heaven, who never ſinned, are as humble as they are holy; and humility was a robe which perfect Adam wore in Paradiſe, in which the ſpotleſs Jeſus was conſtantly arrayed, and with which every created nature in heaven will be for ever inveſted. He who has a deep ſenſe of his original nihility, of his abſolute dependence, of his conſtant liability to revert to his primitive nothing on the ſuſpenſion of GOD's preſerving care, is in the ſame proportion humble. But he who thinks that he has any degree of goodneſs, phyſical or moral, in principle or in act, which is not *immediately* from GOD; who ſuppoſes that he has a power of preſervation, in any reſpect diſtinct from the operative divine will, is in the ſame degree the ſubject of ignorance and pride. If we would diſrobe ourſelves of the worthleſs garment of pride, let us view the true character of GOD, and compare it with our own. In that perfect mirror we may ſee that there is an infinite difference, and that GOD *alone* is

diſtinctly good; in a word, there we may ſee our own *paſſive power*. And then, of "leſs than nothing we may boaſt, and vanity confeſs." In that mirror we may ſee the true temper of the firſt perfect Adam; of the ſecond Adam, who was meek and lowly in heart; and may behold the profound reverence and unutterable joy of the myriads of heaven. The ſole reaſon why they are bleſſed, is divine, ſovereign benevolence; and the great ſource of their humility is their comparative nothingneſs in the balance of perfect equity.

§ 39. There is no ſufficient inducement for *abſolute reſignation* to the divine will, except in a firm conviction that "GOD is love," that is, infinite benevolence; and that divine ſovereignty is (not an arbitrary power of inflicting miſery, but) a *right* of diſplaying that benevolence in one *way*, or in one *degree*, rather than another. But when convinced of this, and that a revelation of it, in a way of grace and mercy, is made to ſinners; when aſſured, that returning prodigals will be kindly received, and that Jeſus will in no wiſe caſt out the ſoul that cometh to him, or to GOD by him; when moreover we know, from the real nature of divine equity, that it ſtands oppoſed to nothing but indulged ſin, and rebellion in the will;—the way appears clear for the moſt abſolute reſignation of ourſelves to the will of GOD. Conſcious indulgence of ſin, indeed, or voluntary rebellion, will prove a bar, and what can be more equitable? In fact, the ſuppoſition of a rebel, continuing ſuch, exerciſing

exerciſing abſolute reſignation, is contradictory. But, ſuch is the wonderful harmony of the divine perfections, the ſoul which is conſcious that it has no allowed guile, may commit itſelf without reſerve, and without fear, into the arms of almighty love for all the happineſs it can want, in time or in eternity. To him who regards juſtice as wearing the aſpect of arbitrary ſeverity, or ſovereignty as including a power of inflicting miſery without deſert, ſelf-dedication is more a painful taſk, than a pleaſing exerciſe. But to an enlightened believer, no act of devotion is more delightful. By him, GOD is viewed as an almighty father and friend, who rejects no returning ſinner, but "loadeth him with benefits." For though "GOD ſhall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy ſcalp of ſuch an one as goeth on ſtill in his treſpaſſes;" yet the humble believer in Jeſus comes *boldly*, that is, with reſigned confidence, to the throne of grace.

§ 40. *Gratitude* is a temper of mind which denotes a deſire of acknowledging the receipt of a benefit. The mind which does not ſo feel, is not as it *ought* to be; but a mind rightly diſpoſed is *ardent* in gratitude, in proportion to the benefit received. When St. Paul ſays of the Heathen, "neither were they thankful," he ſeems to ſtamp the ſin of ingratitude as peculiarly odious. And indeed this was the view which the wiſer heathen themſelves took of that vice; without, alas! feeling the conviction that thereby they condemned themſelves.

ſelves. But it was not peculiar to the Heathen: how common among Chriſtians! and to what an awful extent! What benefactor like GOD; ſo great, ſo good, ſo bountiful, ſo conſtant, ſo diſintereſted! But where are the grateful returns? How few utter from the heart theſe words: "Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits."—"What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me!" Sentiments no leſs rational than devout. Like every other grace which is required of us, virtuous gratitude depends, in part, on right views. A right view of benefits received, of the ſource from whence they flow, and of our own demerit, has a direct tendency to excite gratitude; and while the mind is influenced by grace, (I mean ſubjective, ſovereign grace,) this will be the pleaſing effect. Now what views of GOD have the *moſt direct* tendency to excite and cheriſh gratitude? Not thoſe which regard him as all benevolence, without juſtice; nor thoſe which repreſent him as all equity and general goodneſs, without *ſovereign* benevolence. The gratitude of the former, if grateful they are, muſt be very limited and feeble; for, having no great ſenſe of their own demerit, one powerful motive is caſt away. And the gratitude of the latter, while they reject the ſovereignty with which GOD confers his benefits, muſt degenerate into a feeling, where any remains, reſembling what they have on partaking of a common boon diſtributed without diſcretion. But the devout Chriſtian ſurveys the ſovereign benevolence

benevolence of the Creator in every perſon, in every object, in every quality, and in every event. When he views the ſtarry heavens, and beholds how "one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory;" when he ploughs the mighty waters, and conſiders how they are peopled, and how aſtoniſhing the ſcale of animal exiſtence, from the bulky whale to the microſcopic animalcule; when he traverſes the mountain and the foreſt, croſſes the field and the meadow, or walks in the lawn and in the garden; when he viſits the city, and obſerves the commercial, the political, and the military crowd, or mingles with the devout aſſembly paying the homage of religious adoration; ſovereign benevolence forces itſelf on every ſenſe, and pervades his grateful heart. Nor does the pleaſing emotion forſake him, when he enters the chambers of poverty and diſtreſs, the cell of a guilty priſoner, or the awful place of execution. Compaſſion to the ſufferer does not extinguiſh the flame of gratitude to that ſovereign benevolence which makes one to ſhare of its benefits more liberally than others; while equity guards, with infinite care, every perſon and every percipient creature, ſo that not the ſmalleſt conceivable meaſure of ſuffering is experienced, which is not, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, *deſerved*. But when the devout chriſtian extends his views to the regions of deſpair, and the manſions of the bleſſed, he is melted into reverential awe and grateful praiſe; and is ready to ſay, Why am I, who am a great ſinner, not tormented in thoſe flames? And

And why ſhould manſions of bliſs and glory await me rather than others? "O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of GOD! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!" Glory, everlaſting glory, to *him that ſitteth on the throne* of benevolent ſovereignty and equitable government; and to *the Lamb that was ſlain*, who hath redeemed us to GOD by his own blood, and hath given us the earneſt of our eternal inheritance!

§ 41. GOD has deſigned for the heirs of promiſe a firm and laſting *conſolation*, a *lively hope* that maketh not aſhamed, and a *full aſſurance of faith*. But how can theſe bleſſings be enjoyed, except on the ſuppoſition, that there is no *ſovereignty* in GOD but what is properly and ſtrictly *benevolent*, whereby is abſolutely excluded the right of inflicting evil without deſert. We could not even depend on the moſt explicit promiſe, if mere *will* be the ſtandard of right and wrong. In ſhort, to extend the right of ſovereignty beyond the manner and degree of diſtributing benefits, is the ſame as to eſtabliſh a *right* to do *wrong*; or to confound the terms "ſovereignty" and "injuſtice." But by the evidence derived from a clear notion of the divine character, the timid ſoul is relieved from all its painful fears, in the ſame degree that it feels a conſciouſneſs of its own freedom from hypocriſy and inſincerity in its approach to GOD. Knowing that he is unchangeable

changeable love, his conſolation is firm, his hope is lively, and his aſſurance is infallible. Then the believer may ſay with the church, (Iſa. xii.) "O Lord, I will praiſe thee: though thou waſt angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedſt me. Behold, GOD is my ſalvation; I will truſt and not be afraid; for the Lord JEHOVAH is my ſtrength and my ſong, he alſo is become my ſalvation."

Then may he ſay, My enmity is ſlain; for I ſee nothing in GOD but love and equity: my preſumption is checked; for juſtice forbids it: my pride is ſubdued; for all I have, or hope to have, is of ſovereign grace: my impatience is controlled; for the judge of the whole earth will do right. Juſtice and judgment are the habitation of his throne; judgment ſhall return unto righteouſneſs, and all the upright in heart ſhall follow it. What plea can rebellion urge, in the face of love and equity? What room is left for deſpair, but in the breaſt of the wilful offender? And if a ſpiritual and rational delight be the portion of any, either in this or a future ſtate, it muſt be derived from an apprehenſion of that character of the great Supreme which has been inculcated. This will ſerve as the moſt ſatisfactory clue to guide the ſoul out of every labyrinth, to extricate the paſſions out of painful perplexities, and to avoid the moſt dangerous ſnares. And, finally, by the ſalutary aid of ſuch principles, moral ſcience, ſcriptural theology, and chriſtian experience, delightfully harmonize,

and

and are confirmed, and made mutually uſeful to each other. By contemplating GOD in this light, the ſublimeſt philoſopher and the moſt illiterate diſciple of Jeſus may be alike improved. And here we may ſee, that a right knowledge of GOD includes a proper knowledge of ourſelves; of our evil as well as of our good; of our preſent ſtate and our future expectations.

ADDITIONAL

ADDITIONAL
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

PAGE 7.

It is an abyss never to be PERFECTLY FATHOMED.] The sentiment of this proposition is rather ambiguous. If by "perfectly fathomed" be meant, that some things relating to the *origin of evil*, some *ends* to be answered by its *permission*, some instances of its being over-ruled for good, &c. are not to be "fully comprehended" by a human mind; it may well be admitted: for the same may be said of our own minds and faculties, yea of our bodies, of every animal that moves, of every plant that grows, and of every particle of matter that exists. But as there are *some things* relative to these objects, of which we have a *clear* idea, and to deny which would involve a plain contradiction, the proposition asserting the clear idea may be said to be "perfectly fathomed." Though no man has fathomed, or can hereafter fathom, all the seas in the world, and every part of them; this does not hinder but there are *some parts* which he may "perfectly fathom." In like manner, there are *some* propositions respecting sin, and its origin, of which we have a clear idea, even to certainty; for the denial of them would involve a contradiction. Now if many things in natural philosophy are ascertained to the utmost certainty, which appeared to the ancients "perfectly unfathomable;" what good reason can be assigned that moral science has attained its *ne plus ultra*? Or why conclude, that no *additional* evidence is attainable, respecting the contents of scripture, the divine dispensations, government or grace? Though a blade of grass, or a grain of sand, may have *some* unfathomable properties, that is no good reason why *all* properties of matter, or laws of motion, should be so. How common has been the persuasion that the *origin of water*, and the *cause of lightning* were inexplicable? How many, after their most laborious investigations,

tions, have concluded that the true motion and uniform laws of the planetary system were not to be ascertained?

Highly as I venerate the character, and esteem the writings of Abp. LEIGHTON, I cannot approve of the *spirit* of the above remark, as it evidently tends to check the progress of moral science, and by a parity of reason all other branches of knowledge. It is no part of *humility*, to make our own attainments the *standard* beyond which another must not hope to succeed. This excellent man was very humble; but I apprehend this mode of stating the subject before us, is an evidence that he was not perfectly so, any more than his brethren. He who would *consistently* advance the sentiment, that the *clear knowledge of a* thing is not *attainable*, ought to have it in his power to shew that such attainment implies a contradictory idea. But who ever attempted to shew that a *clear* idea of the *origin* of evil is of that kind? The proposition which asserts the discovery of a perpetual motion deserves no credit, and it may fairly be pronounced unattainable. But why? Not because many ingenious men have failed in the attempt, but because the proposition which asserts it involves a contradictory idea, according to the existing laws of nature. Therefore to advise a mistaken friend to desist from his painful ingenuity, is the part of wisdom and kindness.

All will admit, that self-knowledge is attainable, in *some* degree, and that it is a part of true wisdom to improve it. Now what part of this knowledge is more important, than that of our *good* and *evil*? And has it not been ever considered that the most excellent kind of knowledge is an acquaintance with, or a clear notion of effects, in their *causes*? What is philosophy without this? A thousand phenomena are observed by the young child and the hoary philosopher, with an equal perfection of sense; in what then has the latter any preeminence above the former, if it be not in knowing the *causes* and the *uses* of these effects? To know the source of our *good*, it is plain, is essential to true religion; and can it be uninteresting or useless to know whether our *evil* be from *ourselves* or from some *other* origin? Is it a speculative nicety, inapplicable to moral and religious uses, to ascertain by *clear ideas*, and demonstrative considerations, whether we are *impelled* to evil by our Maker, or whether it springs within ourselves without his causation?

causation? And if from *ourselves*, who will undertake to shew that a *clear*, a *satisfactory*, a *demonstrative* idea of this part of self-knowledge is *unattainable*, or will venture to assign any good reason *why* it *must* be so? What does not involve a contradiction is not impossible, and what is not impossible is possible; but if the knowledge of a thing be possible, it is attainable, and if attainable, who has a right to say to his brother, that he has no right to attempt the attainment of a thing confessed to be *attainable?*

I know not how better to conclude this note, than in the following words of Dr. WATTS: "Let the hope of new discoveries, as well as the satisfaction and pleasure of known truths, animate your daily industry. Do not think that learning in general is arrived at its perfection, or that the knowledge of any particular subject in any science cannot be improved, merely because it has lain five hundred or a thousand years without improvement.—Nor should a student in divinity imagine that our age is arrived at a full understanding of every thing which can be known by the scriptures.—Since there are at present many difficulties and darknesses hanging about certain truths of the christian religion, and since several of these relate to important doctrines, such as the origin of sin, the fall of Adam, the person of Christ, the blessed Trinity, and the decrees of GOD, &c. which do still embarrass the minds of honest and enquiring readers, and which make work for noisy controversy; it is certain there are several things in the bible yet unknown and not sufficiently explained; and *it is certain that there is some way to solve these difficulties, and to reconcile these seeming contradictions.* And why may not a sincere searcher of truth in the present age, by labour, diligence, study and prayer, with the best use of his reasoning powers, find out the *proper solution* of those knots and perplexities which hitherto have been unsolved, and which have afforded matter of angry quarelling?—Happy is *every man* who shall be favoured of heaven to give a *helping hand* towards that introduction of the blessed age of light and love."—*Improvement of the Mind*, Chap. I. § 7.

PAGE 10.

To FORESEE *and to* FOREAPPOINT, *in God is only one and the same thing.*] This language of SAURIN shews plainly, that

his mind was perplexed on the subjects of *prescience* and *decree*, and the mode of reconciling them. The same remark is applicable to the other quotation from Archbishop LEIGHTON. This, no doubt, was the reason why they speak so strongly in the way of dissuasion from such investigations. If, indeed, they thought, as it appears they did, that "to *foresee* and to *foreappoint* in GOD, is only one and the *same* thing;" and if they thought, that there is no *medium* between *decretive* intention and *chance* in any event whatever; it is no wonder that they shuddered at the consequence of prosecuting the subject. However excellent and illustrious these men were in other respects, it does not appear that they had satisfactory or consistent views of this topic. When I enter a dark passage, I am seized with fear, and cry out to those who follow me to "*beware*;" but if I am indulged with light, though a child, my fear is dissipated. —If I am enabled to perceive, with all the satisfaction I can desire, that all the GOOD is *foreseen, because* it is *decreed*; and all the EVIL, *because* it is *included* in the uncounteracted *hypothetical nature of things*, and therefore *not* decreed, and yet under the over-ruling care of sovereign benevolence; all ground of alarm is removed, chance is out of the question, and the divine character appears in so amiable a light as to afford confidence and inexpressible delight through every step of the passage.

If there be a *negative* as well as a positive cause of events, or of the *accidental circumstances* of events; a *decree* of those accidental differences is not necessary in order to account for them. For as a decree is not capable of preventing (as will be proved in a subsequent note) a negative cause of a *limited* mode of *existence*; so a decree cannot be necessary in order to account for a limited and defective mode of *operation* by that existence. But sin is a defective mode of operation, by a creature of limited existence; therefore sin, in all its degrees, may be *foreseen*, without being *fore-appointed*. Again: to *decree* an event, or manner of an event, is to assign it a *positive* and *effective* cause of existence or operation; but moral evil is a *negative* or DEFECTIVE MANNER of operation; therefore while the *operation* itself is decreed, its *defect* need no more be decreed, than the want of absolute perfection.

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To these two principles EVERY THING *is reducible*] This position, as it respects the divine conduct towards a moral system, is of infinite importance. But as I never heard nor saw it denied, the formal proof of it appears needless, until some one shall venture to call it in question. My present conviction is, that the denial of it, in any possible instance, is reducible to some absurd consequence.

PAGE 32.

POWER *of abusing or not abusing*] The word "*power*," in many instances, is extremely ambiguous and equivocal. Most commonly it is used as synonymous with *Cause*. The ambiguity arises from the variety of subjects and connections in which it is used. With a view to illustrate the subject of POWER in general, and particularly the unavoidable use of the term in this work with difference of signification, when treating of different kinds of causation, I would offer these remarks:

1. All *conceivable* "power," or causation, may be reduced to three kinds; physical, moral, and metaphysical.

2. PHYSICAL "power" is nothing else than the active energy of the first cause, operating through universal nature, either immediately, or by means of subordinate agents. Therefore,

3. All physical power is either *primum*, which is the divine nature in its unsearchable activity and blessed life; or *a primo*, proceeding from that adorable source.

4. When the word "power" is used in mechanics, or any department of natural philosophy, it is properly used in a *physical* sense. Thus we ascribe power to weight, to water, to wind; to fire, to a magnet, to chemical agents, &c.

5. Even supposing, with some of the ancient philosophers, and with the profoundly learned RALPH CUDWORTH and some others among the moderns, that the first cause operates by means of *plastic nature*, or a plastic influence in universal nature, as the consummate and infallible *divine art* in all operations *ad extra*, and which LEIBNITZ seems to intend by the term *monads*, this does not constitute the cause to be any other than *physical*.

6. When "power" is ascribed to the *animal* functions,

whereby the organs are employed for labour, for swiftness, or for the attaining or exemplifying of habits, of whatever kind, its character is *physical*.

7. The same is applicable to *intelligent* natures; for the active life of mind is a part of universal nature, operated upon by the first cause, no less than the animal and inanimate parts of the universe.

8. Even the *will*, as far as it is necessitated to act at all, by the efficacious energy of the first cause, acts *physically*; for GOD is no less the cause of the *natural* act of volition, than of the very existence of mind itself, and therefore the power of *willing* is *physical*.

9. MORAL "power" is the *will* considered as FREE from all physical interference; whereby it acts, according to the nature of the agent, with all conceivable *freedom*. For this alone is the immediate *cause* of all *moral* qualities in actions. Hence,

10. The phrases, "moral power," or "moral *ability*," and "moral *inability*," as often used, are not calculated to convey accurate ideas. For, properly, what is a *moral* "power," but the power of producing moral effects? But sin is no less a *moral effect* than holiness; and therefore must have a corresponding *cause*, or "power." In short, to use "moral ability" in a *good* sense exclusively, would lead us to suppose that a *good* moral effect *alone* has a cause called "ability;" while a *bad* moral effect has no cause, as "inability" is used in *opposition* to ability.

11. This inaccuracy has proved peculiarly unfavourable to an amicable adjustment of controverted sentiments, in which these phrases have been employed; and the source of it seems to be, our connecting a *physical* cause with the word "moral," in one instance, "moral ability;" and a *metaphysical* cause with the same word, in the other instance, "moral inability." But, in strictness of idea, that power or cause which produces the *morality* of an effect, whether good or bad, is the *will* at *perfect liberty*, unimpelled and unconstrained. He who has this *free will* has "moral ability;" and he who has it not is "morally unable."

12. METAPHYSICAL "power" is the *hypothetical* reason or cause of an effect; and therefore is perfectly distinct in its kind

kind from the *physical* and *moral* power before explained. Physical power, we have seen, is either immediately from GOD himself, or from subordinate agents influenced by him, in all worlds, whether material, sensitive, or intellectual. And moral power, it has been shewn, is nothing else but the *will*, considered as *unforced*. "Power," therefore, in a metaphysical sense, expresses the *cause*, or the reason, why an effect is to take place with infallible certainty, on *supposition* of the absence of a *physical* cause, and therefore *beyond* its actual influence. Hence,

13. This *metaphysical power*, though in its own nature a *comparative defect*, is nevertheless an *adequate cause* of certainty.

14. Again; this power is predicable of *contingent* existences *alone*, for of these alone can it be said that they are *limited* in essence and in operation; *dependent*, and *insufficient* to preserve their being or goodness, except by way of participation, their efficient energy being ultimately reducible to the first Power.

15. Hence the propriety of calling "metaphysical power" PASSIVE POWER. "Power," in the sense of *cause;* and "passive" because it is *defective* or *negative*, compared with active. In other words it might be defined, an essential CAUSE of *liability to change* in every contingent nature.

16. *Power*, in this *passive* sense, is the same thing as the true *cause* of *defectibility* of whatever kind; and without which defectibility could have no existence. Consequently, the *possibility* of moral evil, and the existence of a *negative cause*, which is metaphysical or *passive* "power," must stand or fall together. He therefore who denies the idea of passive power, must also deny the possibility of moral evil.

17. From these remarks we may see how far Dr. REID was right in blaming Mr. LOCKE for using the term "passive power" in *physics*. If indeed "power" be taken in the *physical* acceptation, which implies *active cause*, energy or force, proceeding ultimately from the first cause, the term "passive" cannot be predicated of it; whether the discourse relate to matter or spirit. But if "power" be taken in the *metaphysical* acceptation, whether the discourse be of matter or spirit, the word "passive" is appropriate. When Mr. LOCKE, therefore, and ARISTOTLE before him, used "passive power" in the *metaphysical* sense, whether the subject relate to matter or spirit,

essence or operation, they were perfectly justifiable. In fact, Dr. REID, and some of his abettors in this criticism, seem to have no other notion of "power" than what is merely physical or moral; and when they professedly treat of Metaphysics, they almost constantly glide into physical causes and effects, and reason accordingly. If they are allowed to assume, that "power" denotes neither more nor less than a capacity or capability of exerting actual energy; it is but fair to demand of them, in return, what denomination they would assign to *an essential cause of defectibility* in all contingent existences, faculties, and operations? Until they furnish us with a more expressive term than "passive power" to indicate that specific idea, their objection must be considered as nothing better than an unreasonable cavil. As the following terms (often used by ARISTOTLE) are not words without precise ideas, let them tell us what appropriate expressions, in the English language, they would substitute for them; δυναμις του παθειν, or, αρχη μεταβολης παθητικης?

18. Hence we may see, how "a *power* of not sinning" *(potentia non peccandi)* is applicable to moral agents, however sinful; since they have a *will*, acting with unforced *freedom*. They have a *moral* power, in the sense explained, of producing their own acts. The physical act of their will, or their voluntary activity in choosing their object, is a physical good, and worthy of GOD's concurrence in giving it efficiency; but the obliquity, pravity, or vitiosity of that act is not of GOD, but proceeds from a *deficient* cause, which shall be afterwards explained.

19. But have *devils* this power of not sinning, and such *means* of avoiding sinful acts as render them culpable for the neglect of them? They have strong reason in their *consciousness* for concluding they are not sufficient for their *own* happiness. They have an *intelligent* nature; and therefore must know that they are not the authors of their own existence, but that there must be a higher will than their own. They have also a *reminiscent* nature; and therefore cannot forget their pristine state, a state of dependence and due subjection to GOD and his just requisitions. Thus they have *sufficient reasons* for obedience, and are *not impelled* to sin.

20. I am here constrained to add, that Mr. LOCKE, in treating

treating of "Power," is not consistent with himself. He states that "power" is either *active* or *passive* (but, by the bye, without stating, as the subject required, that the latter must needs be considered in a *metaphysical* sense), and then undertakes to shew that "Powers belong to agents," that is *exclusively*. Is not this the same as to assert, that his own statement was wrong? His illustration evidently shews that he confounded these notions of powers, in themselves perfectly distinct, namely, physic and metaphysic, or active and passive. By the force of evidence, arising from observations on *liability to change*, both ARISTOTLE and LOCKE in stating the definition and kinds of power, admitted the *passive* as well as the active notion. How comes it to pass, then, that *power*, in Mr. LOCKE's opinion, cannot belong to the *will*? Because, according to him, the will itself is power, and to talk of the power of a power, he observes, is absurd. And for the same reason, he says, *freedom* does not belong to the *will*, but to the *agent*. "For who sees not," adds he, "that *powers* are attributes only of *substances*, and not of *powers* themselves?" Very true, when understood of only *active* powers. But, on the contrary, who sees not, that power, metaphysically understood, belongs to every faculty, and every operation? Hence his denial of *freedom* to the *will* is unfounded. For freedom is not a power in the active sense; but rather an exemption from all physical constraint or counteraction.

21. Mr. LOCKE further says, "The question is not proper, Whether the *will* be free? but, Whether the *man* be free?" But since the *man* is free in SOME respects only, and necessitated in others, as Mr. LOCKE acknowledges, the latter of the two questions cannot be properly answered, without recurring to the idea contained in the former, viz. Whether the MAN be free with respect to his WILL? This is properly the question. If, therefore, as before stated, *freedom* in the strictest propriety be not "a faculty of willing," but an exemption from all physical interference between the *will* of the agent and the *effect* willed, *freedom* is properly predicated of the *will*.

22. Nor can I think that this valuable author gives a satisfactory answer to another important question connected with the preceding one, viz. *What determines the will?* He maintains that "it is always some *uneasiness*." But though in *some* cases this

this answer is true, it is not admissible as a *general* rule. The inference is not conclusive when *universal*, if deduced from premises which are true only in *some respects*. Even supposing all men in the present imperfect state to be determined in their choice, from better to worse and worse to better, by some conscious uneasiness; this can be regarded only as an adventitious circumstance, and not as an original principle of our nature. *In* order to answer the question satisfactorily, we must find a cause applicable to an intelligent nature in all states, and at all times. It must apply to beings perfectly happy, and extremely miserable, as well as to those in an intermediate condition. And what can this *radical cause* of the will's determination be, as to *good* volitions, but the physical goodness of the mind proceeding from the first cause of all good; and, as to *evil* volitions, the agent's metaphysic or passive power? From these *ultimate* causes proceeds *the greatest apparent good*, which may be called the *immediate* cause of determining the will.

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Moral EVIL] On the word "evil," a word of the most radical as well as awful importance, I would here make the following remarks:—

1. EVIL is of three kinds, to some one of which all evil whatever is reducible. These are physical, moral, and metaphysical evils.

2. PHYSICAL "evil" can be only *relative*; for *absolute* evil would imply *two* absolutes, or two infinites, which is a manifest contradiction. Hence,

3. Whatever is "physical," in itself and *absolutely* considered, is *good*. So is matter, motion, spirit, and physical energy of whatever kind. Thus the bodies and their motions by which we are injured, as well as those by which we are benefited and gratified, are alike good, when viewed absolutely. When we are terrified by thunder, injured by lightning, or overwhelmed by volcanoes; when water suffocates, or fire destroys; the physical cause is as good as the sun that warms and enlightens us, or the flowers and fruits that regale our senses. The same may be asserted of the Justice that renders any being miserable. The cause of suffering is in ourselves; not in the first cause, nor in the secondary agents.

4.

4. MORAL "evil" is the want of, or deviation from, *rectitude* in the moral agent, as explained in the definition and the illustration of it.

5. METAPHYSICAL "evil" is the *want* or *defect* of physical good, when compared with that which is unlimited and absolute. Hence,

6. Metaphysical evil is inseparable from *creatures*; as limitation, dependence, liability to failure, or defectibility, are inseparable from them.

7. He who would deny the existence of metaphysical evil, must at the same time deny a cause of *difference* between a defectible and indefectible, a contingent and an absolute existence.

8. Hence we may see the true cause why the old Persian Philosophers, and the Manichean Heretics, held two *eternal* principles, which they called *Oromasdes*, and *Arimanius*; the former expressing the *good*, the latter the *evil* principle: *viz.* They had no just notion of *metaphysical evil*, as distinct from physical; otherwise, they must have perceived that the "cause of evil" could not possibly have a higher origin than *contingent* existence.

9. Hence also we may perceive the source of a most pernicious error held by many modern philosophers, who ascribe every effect in the universe to a *positive* (and therefore *physical*) necessity; and then, to save appearances, call it, most improperly, *philosophical necessity*. While they maintain the *unity* of the first cause, and thus exclude the Persian *Arimanius*, they plunge themselves into another gulph of error, whereby they are constrained to ascribe *all evil* to the first cause, no less than all good. Hence also they are precipitated into other conclusions equally remote from religion, morality, and true philosophy: namely, That there is *no evil* in the universe; that there is no *moral system*, properly so called, since *vice* is no less the effect of physical or decretive necessity than virtue; and consequently, that GOD is not, properly speaking, a *moral Governor*, since he only subjects a part of his intelligent creatures, by an irreversible appointment, to a partial suffering, a deliverance from which eventually it would be *unjust* in him not to effect!

10. From the preceding statement of metaphysical evil, it is obvious that, considered as a *cause*, a *negative* or *defective* cause, it coincides with "metaphysical power;" which is most properly

perly termed "*passive power.*" *Passive*, because all physical, positive causation is *excluded*; *power*, because it is nevertheless a *cause*, that is, assignable *effects* proceed from it.

11. The author has long been of opinion, that the low state of moral science, and the endless varieties in philosophical intellectual systems, both ancient and modern, may be traced principally to this source, viz. The want of just views of passive power, or "metaphysical evil," and its relation to that which is physical and moral. Some, indeed, have affected to question its existence; but probably when they *know themselves* better, cultivate a better acquaintance with the only true source of *humility*, and the genuine ground of all *spiritual gratitude*, and scriptural *prayer*, they will think differently.—However, with a view to fortify the inquisitive student against the designed influence of cavils, which are equally unchristian and unphilosophical, I shall here produce some further evidence not only of its *existence*, but also of its *importance*, in relation to the system of the universe. Thus, then, that most judicious and accurate divine, JOHN FREDERIC STAPFER:

12. "*Malum metaphysicum* est defectus ulterioris sive majoris perfectionis in re; consistit ergo in limitatione determinationum essentialium. Termino *mali metaphysici* ideo usi sumus, quia modernis philosophis consuetus et receptus est, unde lingua illa utimur, quæ hodie maximè in usu est: si vero quis sit, quem terminus hic offendere possit, lubentissimè illum rejicimus, et illius loco, *absentium ulterioris realitatis utique perfectionis in creaturis* substituimus. Ratio cur philosophis termino hoc uti placet, precipuè hæc est, quod commodius ostendi posse putant, quomodo malum morale oriri potuerit, et ut divina attributa providentiamque, contra difficultates a malis tam physicis quam moralibus desumptas, defendere possint. *Idem vero etiam ex ulterioris perfectionis ac realitatis in creaturis absentia necessitate demonstrari potest.*

13. *Finitum* est, cujus essentia et natura sive perfectiones limites habent, quod ergo *limitatum* est. Malum autem metaphysicum consistit in illa limitatione determinationum essentialium: quicquid ergo *contingens*, per consequens *finitum* est, illi malum metaphysicum inest. Entia contingentia *finita* esse, absolute necessarium est; cum vero malum metaphysicum consistat in illa finitudine sive limitatione determinationum essentialium:

essentialium : ergo, malum metaphysicum in rebus contingentibus *absolute necessarium est.*—Cum mundus etiam perfectissimus sit ens contingens, consistens ex entibus finitis, adeoque limitatis, et in limitatione illa malum metaphysicum consistat; hinc mundus etiam perfectissimus sine malo metaphysico esse non potest.—Omnipotentia divina sese extendit ad omnia *possibilia*; mundum vero etiam perfectissimum absque malo metaphysico esse, *impossibile* est : hinc Deus nec per omnipotentiam suam mundum absque malo metaphysico producere potest." Joh. Frid. Stapferi *Instit. Theol.* Polem. Univ. Tom. I. § 449, 455—458.

13. Another author of great celebrity in the learned world is, if possible, still more explicit. " *Malum metaphysicum* dicitur quod per essentiam et naturam suam rem imperfectiorem reddere censetur, quam foret si abesset, adeoque in limitatione determinationum essentialium consistit.—Ita finitudo et limitatio originaria intellectûs nostri habetur pro malo metaphysico, quia intellectus noster longe foret perfectior, si ea finitudine et limitatione careret, quemadmodum superius vidimus intellectum divinum esse perfectissimum, propterea quod infinitus et illimitatus.

14. " *Malum metaphysicum est absolute necessarium.* Etenim malum metaphysicum originarie rem per essentiam et naturam suam imperfectiorem reddit, quam absque eodem foret, adeoque in limitationibus originariis determinationum essentialium et, quatenus natura rei in vi activa consistit, in limitationibus vis activæ ac inde pendentis potentiæ seu possibilitatis agendi in genere consistit. Enimvero cum et vis illa agendi determinati gradus in numerum determinationum essentialium corporis in genere et animarum nostrarum referatur, determinationes autem essentiales sint absolute necessariæ; quin malum metaphysicum absolute necessarium sit dubitari haud quaquam potest.—Si quis malum metaphysicum ab entibus finitis, seu limitatis abesse vellit, is idem ens finitum seu limitatum et infinitum et illimitatum simul esse vult: quod quam sit absurdum, nemo non videt. Nimirum malum metaphysicum sunt limitationes originariæ essentiæ ac naturæ rerum, quas a rebus limitatis arcere velle idem est ac *limitatum* in *illimitatum convertere.*

15. " *Mundus nullus, etiamsi sit omnium perfectissimus, absque malo metaphysico esse potest.* Etenim omnis mundus, etiam om-

nium perfectissimus, est series entium finitorum, tam simultaneorum, quam successivorum. Quamobrem, cum ens finitum sit etiam limitatum; omnis mundus etiam omnium perfectissimus ex entibus limitatis constare debet. Quoniam itaque fieri nequit, ut determinationes essentiales et vires entium limitatorum sint illimitatæ, quippe ideo entia limitata sunt, quia determinationes essentiales certo modo limitantur; patet in omni mundo essentiæ ac naturæ rerum, limitationes originarie adhærere ab eo non separabiles. Jam cum malum metaphysicum, quod per essentiam et naturam rerum mundum imperfectiorem reddere censetur, quam absque eodem foret, in *limitationibus* determinationum essentialium consistat; mundus nullus, etiam si sit omnium perfectissimus, absque malo metaphysico esse potest.

16. " Idem etiam sic ostenditur. Malum metaphysicum, ob quod scilicet mundus imperfectior censetur, quam absque eodem foret, est absolute necessarium. Absolute necessarii in se spectati oppositum impossibile est. Impossibile igitur est concipi mundum absque malo metaphysico, adeoque mundus nullus, etiam si sit omnium perfectissimus, absque malo metaphysico esse potest.—Etsi vix attentione dignum videatur, quod de absoluta mali metaphysici in omni mundo possibili necessitate demonstratur; patebit tamen in sequentibus, maxima attentione hanc esse perpendendam, ne circa mali physici et moralis originem hæsites ac hallucineris, quemadmodum plerisque accidere experientia loquitur.

17. " *Deus mundum facere nequit, in quo nullum sit malum metaphysicum.* Etenim mundus nullus, etiamsi sit omnium perfectissimus, absque malo metaphysico esse potest, consequenter mundus nullus absque malo metaphysico possibilis. Enimvero Deus tantummodo facere potest quod possibile, impossibile non item. Quamobrem Deus mundum facere nequit, in quo nullum sit malum metaphysicum.—Qui notione distincta omnipotentiæ divinæ destituti possibilitatem rerum ab eadem derivant in verbis, quæ non intelligunt, fiduciam omnem collocantes, perfectionem rerum fingunt, quas non intelligunt: ex quibus fictionibus difficultates insuperabiles emanant, quæ sua veluti sponte in auram abeunt, ubi ex notionibus determinatis ratiocineris.

18. " *Impossibilitas faciendi mundum absque malo metaphysico non minuit*

minuit omnipotentiam. Etenim absolute impossibile est, ut mundus, etiamsi sit omnium possibilium perfectissimus, malo metaphysico careat, consequenter mundus absque malo metaphysico in numero impossibilium est. Omnipotentia nec extenditur ultra sphæram possibilium, et hoc non obstante, quod Deo conveniat omnipotentia, potentia ejus absolute maxima. Impossibilitas adeo faciendi mundum absque malo metaphysico non minuit omnipotentiam.

19. "Idem etiam sic ostenditur. Mundus nullus absque malo metaphysico esse potest, consequenter dum Deus mundum absque malo metaphysico facere nequit, impossibilia facere nequit. Sed impossibilitas faciendi impossibilia, non arguit defectum potentiæ. Quamobrem impossibilitas faciendi mundum absque malo metaphysico non arguit defectum potentiæ divinæ, consequenter cum Deo competat omnipotentia, omnipotentiam nullo modo minuit.—Veritas propositionis luce notionum clarissima radiat, ut ea facile percellatur animus modo a notionibus, quæ terminis abstractis, quamdiu eos familiares minime experiris, adhæret, obscuritatem arceas, id quod aliter fieri nequit, quam ubi meditatione satis diuturna et sæpius repetita singulas expendas, donec lucem, quam diximus, in temetipso percipias; id quod in omni casu reliquo tenendum, ubi obscuritatem obstare sentis, quo minus rationum evidentia convincaris.

20. "*Malum metaphysicum ne per miraculum quidem a mundo, aut ente quocunque singulari, auferri potest.*—Qui per miraculum fieri posse somniat, quod in se impossibile; is utique omnipotentiam Dei ad impossibilia extendit, quæ tamen per ea, quæ de potentia Dei demonstrata sunt, sphæram possibilium non excedit. Qui per miraculum ab aliquo ente finito, quod idem limitatum esse constat, malum metaphysicum auferri posse affirmat, is ens limitatum a limitationibus essentialibus liberari, consequenter ex limitato illimitatum, adeoque ex finito infinitum fieri posse contendit: quod quam sit absurdum nemo non videt, tum imprimis per essentiarum immutabilitatem et attributorum incommunicabilitatem intelligitur.

21. "*Malum metaphysicum per se ante decretum rebus decretis inhæret, nec ab iis per idem separari potest.* Cum essentiæ rerum sint immutabiles; nec per decretum immutari possunt. Limitationes itaque essentialium non demum per decretum rebus

decretis superadduntur, adeoque iisdem insunt ante decretum. Quamobrem cum malum metaphysicum per se rebus decretis inest ante decretum.—Qui ideas rerum arbitrarias supra explosas fingunt, limitationes determinationum essentialium per decretum ideis rerum inferunt, et sic in doctrina mali difficultatibus inextricabilibus implicuntur. Qui vero essentias rerum eternas et necessarias, philosophis et theologis ad CARTESII usque tempora unanimi consensu probatas, agnoscunt; limitationes determinationum essentialium ante decretum in ideis rerum, quatenus vi principii contradictionis, adeoque per naturam intellectus, insunt in intellectu divino, considerant, et hoc pacto circa originem ac permissionem mali et concursum Dei ad malum nihil difficultatis sentiunt, quod non superari posset. Et eo fine propositionem præsentem tanquam probe notandam inculcamus. Nimirum malum metaphysicum rebus minime inest, quia decrevit Deus, ut insit, sed quia decrevit res, a quibus abesse nequit. Homo habet facultatem cognoscendi admodum limitatam, quod nemo non novit, cum idem ex semetipso experiatur. Minime autem facultas ejus cognoscendi hoc pacto limitatur potius, quam alio, quia Deus decrevit has essentiæ ejus indere limitationes, quam alias; sed quia Deus hominem producere decrevit, cui in idea ejus hæ facultatis cognoscitivæ limitationes inhærebant, aut, quod perinde est, qui absque hac limitatione produci non poterat, hoc est, si stylo D. THOMÆ ab offensione infirmorum magis remoto uti volueris, quia homo hic absque hac limitatione facultatis cognoscitivæ non erat *factibilis*. Vidit enim pro acumine suo, cum infirmis in omnipotentiam divinam injurius videatur, qui quædam a Deo fieri non posse tuetur, hoc ipsum scandalum, etsi acceptum, evitari, ubi quædam *non factibilia*, aut, si vocabulum displiceat, talia pronuncies, ut ea fieri repugnet: in quorum numero utique sunt creaturæ a malo metaphysico liberatæ, hoc est, in *Deos conversæ*.

22. " *Malum metaphysicum est absentia perfectionis alicujus, non propriæ.* Etenim malum metaphysicum consistit in limitationibus essentialium determinationum. Quamobrem cum ens limitatum habere nequeat nisi determinationes essentiales limitatas, et per easdem in esse hujus entis constituatur; majoris quoque perfectionis capax non est, nec fieri potest, quam quæ vi illarum limitationum locum habet. Quamobrem eo major,

quæ

quæ concipitur, perfectio limitibus ampliatis, est alterius entis, cui limites sic ampliati conveniunt, adeoque aliena. Jam cum quid in se malum sit, quatenus quædam imperfectio ipsi inhæret, adeoque perfectio quædam de eo negatur; limitationes essentiales tantummodo removent perfectionem alienam non propriam, consequenter malum metaphysicum non est absentia perfectionis propriæ, sed alienæ.—Hinc malum metaphysicum potius malum apparet, quam est, et minus quoddam bonus est, si relativè ad majora spectetur. Neque vero utilitate caret hæc observasse: usum enim insignem præstat propositio præsens in philosophia morali, quemadmodum suo loco constabit. Proderit quoque eandem notasse, ne difficultates circa bonitatem Dei nectamus, quod malum metaphysicum malè concipiamus."—CHRIST. WOLFII Theolog. Natur. Tom. I. § 372, 375—378, 381, 546, 548.

23. From these luminous passages, it must appear plain to every unprejudiced mind, capable of estimating the force of demonstrative evidence; plain to the *common sense* of every person who understands the language and the use of the terms employed; that there exists in EVERY CREATURE *the absence of a higher perfection* than what he possesses, except it be maintained that he has all conceivable, all *possible* perfection in himself;—that this want of greater perfection in a creature is of *absolute necessity*, otherwise the *difference* between the creature and the Creator would be but *contingent*, what may be or may not be at pleasure;—that, however, being a *defect*, it cannot be conceived as having a higher origin than contingent existence;—that, therefore, it has no *separate* existence, however inseparable from a creature;—that, consequently, it is included in the very idea of a creature, that IF existence be predicated of it, it must enjoy that existence on terms of *limitation*, or the absence of absolute or all possible perfection;—that created existence itself, then, is *contingent*, but that the terms of that existence are *absolute*, as absolute as the *difference* between finite and infinite;—that no world, however perfect, can be conceived of as existing without this defect;—that, therefore, the *impossibility* of creating such a world is not unworthy of *omnipotence*, since to destroy the difference between limited and unlimited existence is a contradictory idea, and therefore is no proper object of power;—that, for the same reason, it cannot be removed from

any

any creature even by a miracle;—and, since the very idea of limited existence implies this comparative defect, that the exclusion of it could not be an object of decree;—finally, that this defect is not the absence of any perfection that belongs to the *proper nature* of a created existence, but is only the absence of the perfection of *another nature* which has no limits; that is, a finite nature is not infinite, and creatures cannot be conceived of as absolutely perfect and indefectible beings.

24. With the evidence of these irresistible truths, retaining due deference to Dr. REID's general celebrity for accurate use of terms, I am constrained to differ from him, as to the propriety of the expressions "*passive power*." To call it "powerless *power*" may answer the purpose of a *pun*, but it will not bear the *test of* fair argument. If indeed it were allowed, that all power implies *positive* causation; or, which is the same thing, that there is no other *cause* of events but what is reducible to *physical* power; his reasoning and objections might be admitted. But from the preceding arguments it is clear, that there is in every creature, of necessity, a *cause* of defectibility; and there is no good reason why *cause* and *power* should not be synonimous terms in this connection: and it is equally clear, that this cause or power is a *defective* one, implying a *negation of activity*. Now, if the opposite to *active* be properly called "*passive*," and if a metaphysical *cause* be properly called, metaphysically, "*power*;" then "passive power," in a metaphysical sense, is a strictly proper expression. The phrases, "inactive cause," "passive power," and "metaphysical evil," therefore, are synonimous. And as "evil" and "cause" are respectively equivocal terms, used in different connexions in a physical, moral and metaphysical sense, so is "power." It might favour a pun, to say, a *causeless cause*, an *innocent evil*; or, "cause-no-cause," "evil-no-evil;" but puns are not arguments.

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METAPHYSICS, *metaphysical evidence*.] The science of METAPHYSICS, it is but too apparent, is so little understood, as to be often confounded with almost every thing absurd, and scarcely at all applied to the idea most appropriate to the term. Dr. BEATTIE has given an account of the supposed *origin* of the word in a manner, and with an apparent design, totally unworthy of a man of science. According to him, *Ta meta ta physica*,

physica, only expressed "books *posterior* to the physics; either because, in the order of the former arrangement, they happened to be *placed*, or because the editor meant that they should be *studied*, next after the physics," of ARISTOTLE! This might amuse a school-boy, but it excites a strong suspicion that the writer had no *specific idea* on the subject, especially as connected with his frequent use of the expression. He calls it a "mode of investigation that hath introduced many errors into the moral sciences." "Instances of *this metaphysic* are so common," says he, "that we might almost fill a volume with a list of them. SPINOSA'S pretended demonstration of the existence of the one great being, by which, however, he meant only the universe, is a *metaphysical* argument, founded in a series of false or unintelligible, though plausible, definitions. BERKELEY'S proof of the non-existence of matter is wholly *metaphysical*; and ariseth chiefly from the mistake of supposing certain words to have but one meaning, which really have two, and sometimes three." To excite prejudice against the *use* of metaphysical science on such grounds, is just as proper as to exclaim against the *use* of a razor, because this, or the other person has cut his throat with that instrument! On such a principle, Logic, Rhetoric, Poetry, writing, printing, the liberty of the press, and even liberty of every kind, may be condemned as not worthy of existence! But what would Dr. B. substitute instead of it? Not *reason*, for that would identify it with Logic; but *common sense*. "The term *Common Sense*," he observes, "hath in modern times been used by philosophers, both French and British, to signify that power of the mind which *perceives truth*, or *commands belief*, not by progressive argumentation, but by an instantaneous, instinctive, and irresistible *impulse*; derived neither from education nor from habit, but from nature; acting independently on our will, whenever its object is presented, according to an established law." All this is very good. But why should it be thought inconsistent with *metaphysics*? Is there no truth to be perceived, no belief to be commanded, *beyond* the theory of *physics*? Are not our minds, "by an instinctive and irresistible impulse," sometimes made to *transcend* the consideration of what is *actual*, by a farther inquiry into what is *possible*? Common sense, therefore, instead of being *against* metaphysics, is an essential part of it. Reason, indeed, is that faculty

faculty by which we *compare* propositions and ideas, and must ultimately rest on principles intuitively certain.—On the subject of this note I would offer the following remarks.

1. The word φυσις, *natura*, nature, has been applied to so many ideas, that it has become greatly equivocal, as by far the larger number of words are. Accordingly the adjective φυσικος, *naturalis*, natural, is liable to the same variety of applications.

2. The question then is, not in how many *senses* these words have been used, nor yet how they are to be taken in any particular writings of philosophers; but how we *do in fact* use them in a strictly philosophical sense, so as to have *under them* a precise, and uniformly consistent idea, in order to avoid misconceptions and false inferences. By this method we may soon arrive at what appears to me the genuine import of metaphysics.

3. By *nature*, then, I understand "the regular course of causes and effects in the created universe, according to divinely established laws." Hence philosophy, when it has for its object *nature*, as contradistinguished from *morality*, is called *natural;* and on the same account it is called *physics*. But since the philosophy of "nature" in this acceptation is very extensive, it is commonly subdivided, according to the two grand constituent parts of nature, *matter* and *spirit;* the latter under the name of *pneumatology*, and the former under the original term *physics* in a more limited sense; and in a sense extremely restricted, when used in the singular number, for the science of healing, or the prevention and cure of diseases incident to the human body.

4. When we observe any phenomena which are a *partial* deviation from the regular course of causes and effects according to established laws, or in a manner *beside* them, we properly call them *preternatural;* but when we observe them completely *above* that course, we justly call them *supernatural*. Among the former, are monsters; among the latter, miracles. But,

5. The human mind is so formed that it finds *physics* too limited a sphere of enquiry and contemplation, though that term be made to include all created worlds both material and spiritual, with their causes and effects whether past, present, or future. For we find by daily experience, and in a great variety

variety of instances, that the mind can no more resist a *conviction* of evidence arising from first principles respecting *possibles*, than those which arise from actuals. Hence an additional object of science, which may be most properly termed *metaphysics*.

6. The science of *metaphysics* therefore, in strictness, stands related to cause and effect respecting *possibles*, whatever be the nature of its objects; whether matter or spirit, substance or mode, being or not being, good or evil, active or passive, positive or negative.

7. Hence we observe, that metaphysics is a term of very extensive import; for whether the subject be mathematical, logical, moral, or theological, as far as we appeal to an intuitive perception of truth respecting *possibles* and *impossibles*, the evidence is metaphysical. Yet as the science of number and quantity is of itself very extensive, and of great use in society, having also actuals as well as possibles for its objects, it is wont to be considered as distinct from metaphysics, even when treating of impossibles and absurdities. And as the use of logic diffuses itself through all the other arts and sciences, so does the use of its more sublime associate, metaphysics; especially through many parts of Ethics and Theology.

8. We assert, therefore, that this axiom, *It is impossible for the same thing, at the same time, to be and not to be*, is *metaphysical* truth, though often classed with the mathematical; for its object is *not-being* as well as being, *possible* as well as actual. Were a man to tell me, There may be some effects without an adequate cause; the Creator may perform contradictions; a creature may be independent on the Creator; there are no negative tendencies, no limitations, no liabilities to failure, and finally no *cause* of such things; and then attempt to *prove* these things by reasoning; let him call his principles and his reasoning by what name he pleases, it is to no purpose. I might tell him, Your reasoning is not so plain, so irresistible as my perception of the contrary principles. He might urge, Your opposite principles are not mathematical axioms; they are only metaphysics. I care not what name you give them, I would rejoin; I must admit these and similar principles, or else "deny the distinction between truth and falsehood, adopt universal scepticism, and wander without end from one maze

of error and uncertainty to another." Hence I infer with Dr. BEATTIE, that "except we believe many things without proof, we never can believe any thing at all; for that all sound reasoning must ultimately rest on the principles of common sense, that is, on principles *intuitively certain*, or intuitively probable; and, consequently, that common sense is the ultimate judge of truth, to which reason must continually act in subordination."*

9. But it may be asked, When two persons assert that they have intuitive certainty directly opposite, concerning the same thing, which of them shall we credit? Neither of them, on their bare assertion. We should examine for ourselves; as we would respecting opposite testimonies concerning the evidence of sense. If the testimonies be opposite, and all ambiguity of expression be removed; I am sure one of them asserts what he does not clearly perceive. If my own perception be *clear*, I can no more be reasoned out of it, than I can be reasoned out of the evidence of a perfect sense. In the language of Dr. BEATTIE, I might say to my opponent, "You may as well attempt to blow out the sun as to disprove my principles: and if you say that you do not believe them (supposing you understand what I say and intend) you will be charged either with falsehood or with folly; you may as well hold your hand in the fire, and say you feel no pain. By the law of my nature (and nature cannot contradict itself) I *must* feel in one case, and believe in the other; even as, by the same law, we must adhere to the earth, and cannot fall headlong to the clouds.—You ask, why I believe what is *self-evident*? I may as well ask, Why you believe what is *proved*? Neither question admits of an answer; or rather, to both questions the answer is the same, namely, Because I *must* believe it. I *must* believe to be true, and conformable to universal nature, that which is intimated to me by the original suggestions of my own understanding. Nor could I divest myself of this belief, though my life and future happiness depended on the consequence. It is indeed easy to *affirm* any thing, provided a man can reconcile himself to hypocrisy and falsehood. A man may affirm, that he sees with the soles of his feet, that he believes there is no material world, that he disbelieves his own existence. He may

* BEATTIE on Truth, p. 55.

may as well say, that he believes one and two to be equal to six, a part to be greater than a whole, a circle to be a triangle; and that it is possible for the same thing, at the same time, to be and not to be."* In a word, metaphysic evidence is at least on a par with the evidence of sense, and superior to all reasoning.

PAGE 36.

A metaphysical TENDENCY *to failure.*] The word "tendency" is peculiarly equivocal, according to the different kinds of subjects which it expresses; but the radical distinctions are three, which, if we are not on our guard, we are ever liable to confound. All "tendency" is either physical, moral, or metaphysical.

1. PHYSICAL *tendency* is the *aptitude* of a positive cause to produce a corresponding effect. Thus a mechanical power, properly applied, has a tendency to raise a weight; a heavy body to gravitate towards the centre of gravity; water to run down a channel; wind to move a ship under sail; compressed air to expand; light to diffuse itself from a radiant point. Thus also a healthy plant in a favourable situation has a tendency to grow; a spirited animal to exert its vigour; or a sentient being to pursue one object rather than another, according to its nature. And thus moreover the human or angelic mind, by a *physical* tendency, moves to good in general; a good mind tends to God as its ultimate rest, but a bad mind tends to transgression; as every nature tends to its like nature, even irrespectively of choice. Here also it is of importance to observe, that divine influence on the mind is more properly denominated *physical* than *moral*, as it relates to the subject of the influence. These terms, in reference to the work of the Spirit on the soul, are very frequently and most improperly confounded, as will appear more fully from the next remark.

2. A MORAL *tendency*, in the strictest sense, is the very *bent*, inclination, or propensity of the *will itself* of the moral agent towards the object of its choice; and next to this, the moral habitude predisposing the mind to that election: but, in a secondary sense, it denotes the *hypothetical aptitude* of any object presented to consideration to produce moral effects,

* BEATTIE, ut supra, p. 58, &c.

that is, when the thing considered is calculated in its own nature to determine the will to good or to evil; and IF the mind be of a nature suited to the object, the effect will be according to the tendency; but, IF the mind be differently affected towards the object, the tendency is frustrated. This is the most common acceptation of "moral tendency." Thus we say, for instance, that religious truth, the preaching of the gospel, seasonable reproofs and encouragements, well-written books, pious discourse, and a praise-worthy example, have a *good* tendency; but of error, false teaching, reproof or encouragements ill applied, profane books or discourse, and a wicked example, we say that they have a *bad* tendency. In such connections, it is obvious, the tendency is *moral*, not *physical;* and the aptitude is hypothetical, not absolute. On the contrary, divine influence is not hypothetical in its effects, but absolute; or the cause produces the effect with a physical certainty. As the influence is not an object presented to the will for its election, it is not capable of being *refused* in the same manner, though there is a sense in which it may be *misimproved* as a habit.

3. A METAPHYSICAL *tendency*, as perfectly distinct and totally different from the preceding acceptations, is an aptitude arising from *defect*, or a want of greater perfection than that which can be predicated of any creature. It is obvious, then, that it can possess no *moral* quality, as being no object of choice, whether we view it in relation to God or the creature; and equally so, that the aptitude is not *physical*, since it arises from no positive causation or decretive appointment, as abundantly demonstrated in a preceding note. But, since a deficient cause has an *absolute* connection with a physical *existence*, as before proved, its connection with the *operations* of that existence is not conjectural but certain and absolute, in given circumstances. Thus, for instance, an aptitude to non-existence is essential and absolute in the idea of a contingent nature; for an aptitude to exist in a contingent nature, irrespectively of creating will, is a contradictory or self-destructive idea. And, for the same reason, an aptitude to *continued* existence in the same nature is an idea equally self-destructive. For the same reason, also, an aptitude to well-being, or goodness, cannot be predicated of a contingent nature,

nature, any more than of simple existence; for the one as well as the other is of positive causation, and absolutely dependent on supreme will. For if aptitude to *exist* be not predicable of a contingent nature, it follows *a fortiori* that aptitude to the *perfection* of existence cannot be so. It follows therefore irrefragably, that *defectibility*, or an aptitude to failure, is absolutely inseparable from a contingent nature. Consequently, the idea of a contingent or created nature, without a metaphysical tendency to the loss of *goodness*, or the *perfection* of existence, is a self-contradiction. Hence we fairly conclude, that the perfection of our nature, no less than our being, is caused by the *sovereign will and favour* of Him, who alone is absolute Being, and absolute Goodness. Therefore, adieu for ever, all ye philosophical subtilties, whose feeble efforts are directed against the doctrine of *sovereign grace* and the *uniform experience* of the humble and grateful Christian! Before this glorious truth, let every mountain be brought low, that JEHOVAH ALONE may be exalted.

4. It is obvious that a physical and metaphysical tendency may *co-exist* in the same subject, though in their nature not only distinct but also directly opposite to each other. A want of proper attention to this important fact, may prove a source of much confusion and error. Opposite physical tendencies and opposite metaphysical tendencies being incompatible, we too hastily conclude, without regarding their different natures, that two opposite tendencies in the same subject are incompatible. But this is for want of due consideration, as every one may be easily convinced; for from the creation of the world to the present moment there must have been a *physical* tendency to exist in all creatures, as long as the creating *fiat*, providential energy, and established laws exist; and there must be a metaphysical tendency the contrary way, that is, to nihility, otherwise divine support would be unnecessary to a dependent nature. To say that a tendency to nihility does not exist in a creature *while* it has a tendency to exist; and that the former takes place only when the cause of a physical tendency is suspended, is to confound the ideas of tendency and fact. The idea of annihilation, is that of a supposed *fact;* but if there be no tendency to that fact prior to its existence, there would be an effect without a cause. Nor can it be said that annihilation is

a *positive* act of the Creator, without absurdly supposing that a creature, or the whole world, would exist *without* support, if only *permitted* to exist. And whether this supposition deliberately maintained would not be an insult to *common sense*, let the impartial decide.

5. A *hypothetical* tendency is not properly speaking a *different kind* from those already mentioned, but may be attributed to either according to circumstances. Thus we may say, in reference to a physical tendency, IF the laws of motion be continued, the planets will continue to revolve around the sun the next age as well as the present: and, on the contrary, IF the laws of motion were suspended, there would ensue an universal stagnation. And, as to a metaphysical tendency, we may say, IF divine energy and support were withdrawn from the universe of creatures, they would cease to be, as having the only cause of their existence withdrawn: but, on the contrary, IF the same energy which now operates be continued, their tendency to nihility will not terminate in the *fact* of annihilation.

6. Nor is an *absolute* tendency any thing different from those already explained; only that it belongs to the first cause in a sublimer sense than to any other. If a physical tendency be "the *aptitude* of a *positive* cause to produce a positive effect," we may say, that this belongs to the first cause most eminently, and to the utter *exclusion* of every hypothetical consideration. Hé exists actually and positively, and his *tendency* to do so is ABSOLUTE. But a metaphysical tendency is also in one respect *absolute*, while in another *hypothetical*. Being and goodness, or the infinitely good Being, ALONE, exists of *absolute* necessity; but *every other* being and goodness must needs be contingent or hypothetical, as depending on the first will. Nevertheless, IF a contingent being be supposed to exist, his tendency to nihility is *absolute*. While the *being* is contingent, the *tendency* is perfectly absolute, independent of all will. To give being is *optional*, but not so to give to that being freedom from tendency.

PAGE 90.

The spread of the gospel among the Heathen.] When this part of the work was penned, and even printed, little did the author

author think, that a missionary spirit would appear so soon, and to such a glorious extent as at present; and much less that he should have to address so large a number of missionaries, as the first fruits of those exertions which have been made. His expectations of *immediate* success were not then sanguine; and his views of the *ultimate* result continue unaltered.

PAGES 176, 177, 340.

The hypothetical NATURE OF THINGS.] This phrase, "The nature of things," is here used in the *metaphysical*, that is, in the highest sense, including all *possibles* as well as actuals; a sense very different from what has been sometimes given of it. Dr. BEATTIE's explanation of it, for instance, is this: "If I be asked, what I mean by *the nature of things*, I cannot otherwise explain myself than by saying, that there is in my mind something which induces me to think, that every thing existing in nature, is determined to exist, and to exist after a certain manner, in consequence of established laws; and that whatever is agreeable to those laws is agreeable to the nature of things, because by those laws the nature of all things is determined."* It must be plain to the discerning reader, that this description embraces only *physical* nature, as actually constituted by divine appointment. But, surely, this is a very confined sense of the phrase; for it is sufficiently obvious, that all things must have a *nature* antecedent to, and independent of their *establishment*. On this important subject I solicit the reader's candid attention to the subjoined observations.

1. What is *possible* has a *nature*, whether it receive existence or not; and my perception assures me, that no mathematical axiom can be more certain than this.

2. The *nature*, for instance, of God, of goodness, of truth, and of defect, cannot possibly depend on voluntary appointment, without identifying opposite natures, and thereby involving the most absurd contradictions.

3. If it be asked, whether there be any *nature* of things independent of God? We reply, No; not independent of his *existence*. For, if there were no God, there could be no nature of things. On the contrary, they who allow of the nature of things, but deny the being of a God, act a part most

 absurdly

* BEATTIE on Truth, p. 54.

absurdly inconsistent; for they admit a fact which has not even a shadow of evidence.

4. As the *nature* of GOD is not the effect of his will, so every possible *nature* CONTRASTED with his must, for the same reason, be perfectly independent on mere will, though every created *existence* must be absolutely dependent. For God's nature, being *absolute*, excludes the POSSIBILITY of *another* absolute nature.

5. We know that *evil* exists; not only *physical*, which is merely relative; but also *metaphysical*, which is absolutely attached to contingent existence; and *moral*, which *in strictness* is the only real evil.

6. We know, with evidence not less clear and certain than that of our own existence, that evil was *possible* before it became actual; and that whatever is possible has an antecedent *nature* as the ground of possibility.

7. My conviction is equally clear and certain, that an *absolute* nature, which alone is divine, is *good*, and only good; or, in other words, that in God there is not both a good and an evil nature, from whence good and evil might proceed, alike, to possible and actual existence. Therefore,

8. I can as soon deny the evidence of a mathematical axiom, of common sense, or any sense or principle whatever, as deny that there is a "nature of things" from whence evil proceeds, as distinct from, and *contrasted* with, the first absolute nature.

9. This representation is so far from symbolizing with the Manichean sentiment, that it is the most effectual confutation of that error. For that which exists only by *contrast*, cannot exist *absolutely*; and that which is not *absolute* cannot be self-existent.

10. When "the hypothetical nature of things" is represented as the *source* of moral evil, nothing is implied in it inconsistent with another statement (p. 346, &c.) which makes the immediate origin of sin to be passive power united with liberty, or free will. For passive power, and its influence in reference to the event of sin, are *included* in the hypothetical nature of things, as now explained.

PAGE

PAGE 378.

Sin merely the parent of pain—WILL BE NOTICED.] This was a part of the author's original plan, in opposition to the doctrine of HARTLEY, PRIESTLEY, and others of that school. But having edited President EDWARDS's masterly Treatise on God's last end in the creation of the World, with some explanatory notes, the investigation is thought needless in the present work. Besides, if the principles already stated and proved be duly weighed, the sentiment in question, it is presumed, must appear alike unscriptural, irritational, and contrary to existing facts.

APPENDIX;

IN WHICH ARE NOTICED

OBJECTIONS AND ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS

MADE BY DIFFERENT WRITERS,

IN REFERENCE TO SOME OF

THE AUTHOR'S SENTIMENTS.

APPENDIX, &c.

PREVIOUS contemplations of divine Equity and Sovereignty led me, while endeavouring to separate the real doctrine of "Predestination to Life" from all *impure mixtures*, in a Discourse on that subject with explanatory notes, to give my thoughts on the causation of EVIL as well as of *Good*. In defining the pre-disposing, metaphysical cause of moral evil, I called it "a tendency to defection" which would have such influence on the free agent as must ensure his *wrong manner* of choice, if not *graciously* prevented. The first edition of that Discourse excited some *inquiry*; but when a second was called for, it created *alarm*. The idea seems to have gone forth, that I had some "new theological tenet" which must not be suffered to pass without critical examination.

This resolution to examine, gave rise to a *Manuscript*, without the author's name, which within two years past has obtained an extensive circulation; and being soon recognized, from internal evidence and other circumstances, to be the production of the late Rev. ABRAHAM BOOTH, it made a considerable impression on some who read it. To this an immediate reply was written, with a view that those who had perused the one, might have an opportunity of seeing the other. It was well known that Mr. BOOTH had read much on theological subjects, and that his character stood high as an orthodox divine. Hence many who, from their own acknowledgements, were little accustomed to think on the subject with precision, or even in any manner to satisfy themselves, were set afloat. It seems they thought that HE who had turned

turned over so many volumes ancient and modern, Popish and Protestant, foreign and domestic, latin and english, must needs be right, and therefore were emboldened. But, in reality, so little was that good man accustomed to contemplate the truth of ideas, in their general and abstract nature, that he could not even perceive the difference between a metaphysical "tendency to moral evil," and a *morally evil tendency*; and that in reference to the ORIGIN of moral evil! But his reasoning, which some others appear to have tamely followed, can have no real force against my professed and explained sentiments. Such a torch can only answer the purpose of setting fire to a combustible image of their own fabrication. The mode which Mr. BOOTH adopted, arising from an entire misconception and misrepresentation of the argument, though well adapted to sound an alarm, is only calculated to prove, that he was either extremely ill versed in the subject on which he wrote, or else acted from a motive which I should be unwilling to ascribe to him.

The first *printed* opposition of any moment which was made to the argument for the origin of moral evil lying *exclusively in ourselves*, appeared in the CHRISTIAN OBSERVER, (March, 1806) where fourteen closely printed pages were devoted to the subject. But though an immediate reply was written, the glaring want of candour manifested in the review, in connection with an evident ignorance of the true hinge of the controversy, were at the time deemed sufficient reasons by many of my friends, for treating the anonymous writer with silent neglect. As however, I am now noticing my opponents in succession, I shall not pass by the OBSERVER, but devote a few pages to the exposure of his contradictions and absurdities. Indeed he seems not to have known his own mind; for what he advances in the text, he appears to recant in a concluding note! And while he declaims

declaims against *metaphysics*, he seems not a little at a loss for any first principles on which to rest. Truth is one and consistent; but error is multiform and contradictory.

The investigation of the abstruser subjects connected with theology is not indeed wholly discouraged by this writer, though he considers the object of his critique "censurable for excess." But the reader should be aware, that the Sermon on the Scriptural doctrine of Predestination does little more than glance at the origin of evil, because I concluded that additional notes would be more suitable for such discussion. On the former the Reviewer is almost silent: while with respect to the latter he professes to take an alarm "at the *boldness*, not of the speculations, but of the *conclusions*." But if the conclusions be fairly drawn, what is there in them to be dreaded? He allows that the subject is "not forbidden ground;" and if it be discussed at all, how is it possible to avoid "abstruse investigation?" The propriety of *diffidence*, as well as the acknowledgement of *difficulty*, must depend upon circumstances. Had I expressed a *hesitating* diffidence, or a sense of difficulty *not surmounted*, I must have belied my convictions, and resisted the force of evidence. Twenty years ago, I should have been disposed to profess both: but closer investigation; the discussion, and to my own mind the satisfactory answer of innumerable objections; with the incalculable advantages resulting from a conviction of the importance of my conclusion, in favour of experimental and practical religion, and in the solution of controversial questions; (beside its superior consistency with the sacred scriptures and with itself;) have contributed to give me more "confidence" than the Reviewer is willing to justify, and raised me above difficulties with which he seems greatly embarrassed. But, it seems, he was persuaded *a priori* that the question "will, in all likelihood, descend to posterity with all its difficulties on its head."

With

With such a persuasion, fair investigation is excluded; the cause is already prejudged. A person so disposed, is not a humble inquirer after truth, but a sceptical objector, who probably would employ his time on another subject, or in the plainer duties of his calling, to much better advantage.

I have not expressed myself very explicitly respecting the ABSTRACT NATURE *of sin* in the notes to the Sermon; but since my sentiments on this head are clearly implied in what is said on the origin of moral evil, the OBSERVER has made free strictures on them. What he principally objects to, is the idea of sin being, in its abstract nature, PRIVATIVE. But by denying it, the *novelty* of opinion lies with him; since the general current of moralists and divines consider it abstractedly as a *defect*, or a want of what *ought* to be. Or if we say, It is concretively *what ought not to be*, the result is the same; the idea conveyed is of a *privative* nature. When we regard the idea as *positive*, we must include the *physical act*, in union with its obliquity, or defective manner. We do not say, that the physical part of a sinful action is privative; nor has it ever been proved that the *sinfulness* of an act is *not privative*.

Mr. LOCKE's remark, produced by the OBSERVER, deserves notice: "It will be hard to determine whether there be really any ideas from a privative cause, till it be determined *whether rest be any more a privation than motion*." With due deference to this great man, I do not see much difficulty in making the determination; though my want of diffidence may be censured by the OBSERVER. The precise question is, Which is the most proper representation; to say, *Rest is a privation of motion*, or, *Motion is a privation of rest*? To my mind it is a plain principle, that all motion is *derived* from the first mover, who is an *eternally active* cause, to the utter exclusion of all passiveness. And it is a principle equally plain, that no being in the universe can be said

to

to be at rest, which had not, in a corresponding sense, a prior motion. Hence we see the OBSERVER'S mistake when he says, "Every thing may be considered by the mind either privatively, or positively, at pleasure." On the contrary, the most important object in the universe cannot, without the grossest abuse of language, be considered privatively; not even by those who plead for Atheism. An atheist may raise objections against the actual existence of a GOD; but no one possessed of common sense will question, whether the idea of a GOD *supposed to exist* be *privative* or not.

This critic manifestly confounds IDEAS and APPELLATIONS; maintaining that because ideas "may receive either a privative or a positive appellation," the ideas themselves may be so denominated. What privative appellation would this writer apply to GOD? To estimate ideas as positive or privative by terms applied to them which are either positive or negative, is fallacious in the extreme. A child in grammar, and the youngest logician knows, that ideas decidedly positive are often expressed by negative terms; and *vice versâ*. Surely the application of the term "restless" to a moving body, can never make the *idea* of motion *less* positive. Were ideas themselves altered by the application of terms to them, we should have nothing to trust to in ratiocination, and the consequence would be universal scepticism. It is granted that in many instances it is extremely difficult to *ascertain* accurately, whether an idea be positive, negative, or privative. But this is no good reason why an idea in its *own nature* should not be one of these rather than another. In the scale of existence, indeed, every rank between the highest genus and the lowest species may be regarded, by changing the relation, as either genus or species, at pleasure; the reason is, such classifications are mere creatures of the mind; but not so the nature of ideas, whose archetypes are causes and effects, and other metaphysical relations. And though

in a less accurate sense we should say, that in many instances, the same principle may be considered as a *cause* of one thing and as an *effect* of another; yet we cannot infer that the idea of that thing, in its own proper nature, is *indifferently* either positive or negative.

Few things are more clear, than that the word "sin" is a concrete, and the word "sinfulness" an abstract term; yet the OBSERVER constantly confounds them. Thus he states and reasons: "The abstract term *sin* seems variously used to denote, either a particular class of mental qualities, or a particular class of actions, or perhaps more generally, a particular state or habit of the mind. But in what sense, or with what propriety, either a class of mental qualities, or a class of actions, or a state of mind, can be affirmed to be *in its own nature privative*, we are at a loss to determine." But *why* at a loss? The difficulty is of the critic's own making. The true question to be decided is, not whether sin in the *concrete*, but whether sin in the *abstract*, or the *sinfulness* of a moral action, be not *privative*? The OBSERVER distinguishes between "mental qualities" and a "state of mind;" but do not mental qualities *constitute* the state of the mind? However, may not both be *defective*? And is not *defect*, or the *want* of what *ought* to be, a privative consideration? Nor will it avail to say, that *sin* implies the *presence* of what *ought not* to be; for this would be only to use the term "sin" in a concrete form, concerning which there is no ground of difference. Hence, the futility of the following observation: "Vice is very commonly considered under the metaphor of a disease, and virtue as the health of the soul: but nothing can be more usual than to define health privatively, as the *absence of all disease*; and perhaps in all languages it is no less natural to designate virtue by such negative terms as *innocence* or *spotlessness*, than to associate with vice such negative epithets as impious or unprincipled." What is this but saying, either (what nobody questions) that

that language is capricious; or, that there is no such thing as a positive and negative idea *in itself considered*? But if so, there is no greater impropriety in calling the sinfulness of an act privative, than there is in calling it positive. Were the real nature of ideas capable of being thus metamorphosed by the use of terms, virtue itself might be stamped as a privative idea; any effect might become a cause; and any cause an effect; of nothing could we be certain, and every step in our pursuit of truth would be marked with sceptical indecision.

But by what rule shall we determine on the nature of ideas, since terms often confound rather than assist us? In my apprehension, we need only ascertain what is the *perfect state* of any thing, of any action, or manner of action, in order to arrive at certainty. Every degree of resemblance to that state is positive; but the want of resemblance, whether it be expressed by negative or positive terms, is a privative idea. Now *virtue* (or holiness) is perfective of the nature of man, and belonged to his primitive state; and vice, in every degree, implies a *want* of resemblance to that perfect state. Hence the idea of the former is positive, and that of the latter negative, by whatever terms expressed. Again, *activity* has a greater character of perfection than inactivity, as not only bearing a greater resemblance to, but also actually proceeding from the first cause; and thus the *want* of activity is a privative idea. The same remark is applicable, for instance, to *light*, *life*, and *health*. These are more perfect states, and the resemblance they bear to the nature and agency of GOD, who is *perfect act*, is, irrespectively of terms, far greater than that of their opposites, darkness, death, and disease.

In brief, the great source of mistake in the OBSERVER, throughout, lies in his confounding the nature of *ideas* with the *terms* by which they are expressed; not reflecting, that the former are unchangeable, while the

latter admit of perpetual variation. This is evident from the following passage. "The word *create*, originally referring to material objects, and vulgarly bearing a positive character, retains this character in its metaphysical use, and therefore cannot, without violence, be associated with words of a simply privative form." But the point in debate is not whether the *word* "create" bear, either vulgarly or learnedly, a positive character, but whether the *idea* to *create* be or be not strictly positive? And who that has not a desperate cause to serve can deliberately question it? When we say, "The man who just now walked freely out of the room *created his own absence*," we use the words *figuratively*, that is, *improperly*. The act of walking is dignified with the term creating, and the relative effect of that act, which is a non-entity, is also dignified with a positive name as if it were a real existence. But surely one who justly discriminates, would not infer from this, that the real idea, stripped of the figure, is any thing else than *privative*. When Jehovah says, "I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the light, and *create darkness*; I make peace, and *create evil*;" the mode of expression is figurative. The substitution of affirmative terms can never alter the *nature* of the thing expressed. Divest the ideas of their figurative clothing, and their genuine nature will appear. "I create darkness." Here the *act* of removing the light is *figuratively* called *creating*, and the *effect* of that act is *properly* called darkness. The word "create" alone is here figurative. Again, "I create evil." Here, even supposing this term to refer to moral as well as to physical evil, the expression is evidently figurative, and the figure lies in the word *create* being substituted for the act of removing good. And the plain reason of the figurative mode is, that it represents more forcibly GOD'S dominion over light and darkness, joy and sorrow, good and evil.

Thus,

Thus, if I mistake not, it is plain, that the OBSERVER is totally wrong in his notion of the sinfulness of actions, or the abstract nature of sin; and is as remote from sound reason and critical accuracy, as he is opposed to the generality of intelligent writers on the subject. The "Hypothesis," (or more properly the argument for the origin of moral evil being *exclusively in ourselves)* which he attacks, he candidly acknowledges to be "the result of some thought, and supported with some acuteness." With what acuteness it is supported, it is not for me to decide; but I may declare that it is "the result of some thought," since it has long occupied, at intervals, my most serious attention and minute investigation. I have endeavoured to view it in all its bearings, relations, and consequences; through every possible medium, and under every variety of moral feeling; paying a due regard to all that ingenuity could advance against it. My aim has been to investigate the truth of ideas, and the reality of things; regarding words and phrases no further than as they tend to convey my meaning. And, instead of making a man "an offender for a word," because he adopts not my phrase, I care not what language is used, if truth of sentiment be preserved. The critic observes, "We cannot but regard it as the accepted doctrine of a tolerably numerous class of individuals." I hope this remark is true; persuaded as I am that, in proportion as pure and undefiled religion prevails, in connection with studious enquiry, this doctrine will take place of all others; seeing the plain import of it is, that *all good is from God,* and *all evil is from ourselves exclusively,* including the *true ground* of these acknowledged propositions.

The OBSERVER still objects: "When it is pronounced to be impossible that a created being should be free from a natural [rather, a metaphysical] tendency to deterioration, we are tempted to enquire the force of the word 'impossible' as thus employed." I also am

"tempted to enquire" why the critic should institute a doubt whether my meaning be *physically* or *metaphysically* 'impossible;' while every intelligent reader must see with a glance that I must mean the *latter*. What less can my expressions design, than that the very conception of the contrary of what I asserted implies an absurdity; or, in the OBSERVER'S own phrase, "is utterly inconceivable on any supposition." How far the proposition is "self-evident" I will not contend; since what *is* so to one is *not* so to another. To *some*, even the light of the sun is not self-evident; but to my mind the proposition for which I contend is as evident as that the whole is greater than its part. "To attempt to demonstrate that it is *not* self-evident," observes the critic, "would indeed be a very embarrassing task." It certainly would; and so it would be for any man, whether blind or not, to demonstrate that the light of day is a dark thing. When he affirms, that "to *doubt* an axiom is to *prove* that it is no axiom," he sufficiently proves his position to be no axiom. In moral science, will he not allow that this is an axiom?—*There is a God.*—But because an atheist *doubts* it, it seems he *proves* that it is no axiom! To merit this honourable appellation, it is enough, as I have already observed, that the denial of the proposition so termed is reducible to a self-contradiction; otherwise, the very existence of an axiom must depend on the courtesy of a caviller. Even a mathematical axiom is not self-evident till the terms employed and the ideas they convey be rightly understood by suitable illustration.

To some persons, particularly to the OBSERVER, this proposition, that *all created nature, as such, tends to nihility*, is so far from being self-evident, that it is not evident at all. He allows, however, in one place, that it is a *truth*, though in another he *recalls* it. For, in a note at the end, he says, "The preceding sheet was printed off, before we perceived that we had expressed ourselves

ourselves in language which may be construed into an admission of the truth of the doctrine maintained by Dr. Williams, as it respects the necessary tendency of all created nature to *nihility*. In a popular sense, indeed, it may perhaps be said (though the proposition will be found to fill the ear rather than the mind) that what sprung out of nothing at the pleasure of another, must again become nothing when left to itself; and for the sake of shortening the discussion, we were willing to concede thus much. We must at the same time confess that we do not quite understand the position that *created beings tend to nihility*: and we leave it to our readers to judge, whether there be much more meaning in saying that what *is* tends *not to be*; than in saying that what *is not* tends to *be*; or, in other words, whether a tendency to *annihilation* in that which *exists*, be at all more conceivable, than a tendency to become *existent* in that which *exists not*." On this very singular mixture of concession, recantation, confession, and critical apostacy, I would remark,

1. The *concession*, that what sprung out of nothing at the pleasure of another, must again become nothing when left to itself, does not fill my *ear* any more than another proposition, but it fills my *mind* as a glorious truth worthy of the infinite majesty of God.

2. The *recantation* also fills my *mind* as well as my ear, but it is with concern and horror at its legitimate consequences. It is left, it seems, to the judgment of the reader, as a *doubtful* point, whether the grossest pantheism be true or not!

3. The *confession* is easily admitted, that the writer does "*not quite understand* the position that created beings tend to nihility;" and this appears to be his best apology for making it.

4. By his *apostacy*, the reviewer confounds Creator and creature. For is not this the primary, essential difference between them; God *is*, and tends *to be*; the

creature *is*, and tends *not to be*? If tendency *to be* or to *exist* belong *alike* to Creator and creature; there would be no *difference* in their tendency to exist. But is it not universally acknowledged that God's tendency to exist is *absolute* as opposed to *contingent*? and equally so, that every other being is contingent, and that the very idea of contingent being is, that it exists ONLY by the *will* of another; and therefore has no tendency *to be* in its own nature?

Nor will it alter the case to say, that a creature *tends to exist*, in virtue of EXISTING LAWS. For the absurdity still returns. Are not *existing laws* CONTINGENT, in opposition to absolute? And if so, *they* also have no tendency *to be* in their own nature, any more than a created being. For what are the *laws* of nature but the *appointed order* of created existence? If *appointed*, they must be *contingent*; and if contingent, they exist ONLY by the will of another. And surely what so exists, has no tendency to exist in its *own nature*; and what has no tendency to exist in its own nature, has, in its own nature, a tendency *not to exist*; for I suppose it is sufficiently plain, that there is no *medium* between a tendency *to exist*, and a tendency *not to exist*. Therefore, these LAWS OF NATURE themselves tend *not to be*, in the *same sense* as the creatures which exist by them.

Very different, in some respects, is the production of the Rev. WILLIAM BENNET, in a series of Letters addressed to me, respecting the Origin of moral Evil. For the civil and kind manner in which he expresses himself, on the score of personal respect, he has my friendly and grateful acknowledgements. Yet his method of investigation is not quite fair, however fairly intended; for though he produces *my words*, yet he puts his *own meaning* on them. That sort of sophism which is called *imperfect enumeration* appears peculiarly

peculiarly prominent in most, if not in all his arguments and objections. For if, while enumerating the different acceptations of *tendency*, *power*, and the like, he include only their *physical*, to the exclusion of their *metaphysical* acceptations, even contrary to an explicit caution against such conduct, his argument must needs be sophistical. If an author, when under the necessity of employing words capable of different meanings, be not at liberty to fix upon those that suit his purpose, to the exclusion of all others, there is an end of all fair discussion. If, for instance, I am not at liberty to use the word "tendency" sometimes in a physical, at other times in a moral, or in a metaphysical sense, according to the nature of the subject; but a sense is given it by an opponent totally different from the avowed general design of the argument; fair discussion is converted into logomachy, the primary principles in debate are confounded, and every thing is enveloped in obscurity and confusion. Mr. B. must know, that I do not contend about words, —whether "tendency," "passive power," or any other —provided the ideas be allowed, and appropriate words be adduced to convey them. Surely the expressions "*tendency* to nihility, *physically* considered," and "*tendency* to defection, *morally* considered," could not be understood to mean a *physical tendency* and a *moral tendency*, but by an entire oversight of the nature of the subject; which was to shew the *certain connection* between *contingent* existence, both physical and moral, and *defection*, when that contingent existence is considered in its own proper nature. *Physical* defection is *nihility*, and *moral* defection is *transgression*. Now the sentiment maintained is (if haply I may be rightly understood) that there is in the *nature* of *every* contingent existence a *certain connection* with *nihility*, which connection immediate divine energy alone can prevent. And is not this implied in the commonly received doctrine of providential conservation? And why a hypothetically

thetically *certain connection* with *nihility*, may not be expressed by a metaphysical *tendency* to *nihility*, it is difficult to guess.

But Mr. BENNET's principal objection, and indeed the substance of his book, lies against that branch of the subject which relates to *transgression*. I have uniformly maintained, in effect, that the divine volition *alone* prevents a physical *contingent* existence from *ceasing to be*. Now as there is but one *absolute* existence; as the *goodness* of a creature is no less of a *contingent* nature than the being in which it inheres; and as the very *idea* of a contingent nature is, that it exists *only* by the *will* of another; is it not evident, that such is the connection between mental goodness and ceasing to be good (good, I mean, as to its *physical* existence) that nothing keeps them asunder but the sovereign will of God? Suppose a mind righteous and holy, at any time, or in any world; suppose it possessed of physical powers capable of producing moral acts; suppose it also endowed with suitable objects and unrestrained freedom of choice. The question is now fairly put, Is there any *certain connection* between this contingent goodness, considered in *its own nature*, and the abuse of free will, or trangression? In other words, is there any thing beside the sovereign will of God to prevent the connection? Is it *chance*? There is no such thing. Is it some power or principle in the mind? That is *contingent*. But to be contingent, as before shewn, is to be kept from the opposites of being or well-being, that is, from nihility or transgression, *only* by the continued will of him whose nature is absolute. Now what is the unavoidable inference? It is, That *all our good is of God*, and *all our evil from ourselves*. These are the legitimate consequences of my sentiments, and nothing worse; and yet Mr. BENNET trembles for consequences!!

Far greater cause have I to tremble for the consequences of the *opposite* system; as confounding, in some

some important respects, the essential *difference* between Creator and creature—as implying that the goodness of men and angels is not *contingent*—as ascribing to "the old idol free-will" what belongs to the *grace* of GOD—as transferring to "the new goddess contingency" what properly belongs to *ourselves*—as instituting a series of *self-inconsistencies* calculated to generate scepticism and infidelity—as leading the inquisitive mind to a broad sea, without affording it either compass or rudder—as exalting *self* to such a degree, that we are not more the cause of our *evil* than of our *good*—as casting a foul aspersion on the divine character, that he was *bound* to afford men and angels what he has not *in fact* afforded—as attempting to wrench from us the use of intuitive knowledge, and the strongest argument for the being and perfections of GOD—as offering insult to demonstrative and primary truths—as instituting a kind of defectibility which has no cause in the nature of things—as giving such a view of morality as is incompatible with scripture—as allowing the *fact* of moral evil, for which result there was *no tendency* of any kind, no predisposing adequate cause in the universality of things—and as charging the Deity with cruelty and injustice, because he does not give to his creatures more than their due!—These, and innumerable other horrible consequences, it would be easy to prove, are the genuine offspring of Mr. BENNET's opposing scheme. But it is needless to illustrate such consequences, after what Mr. GILBERT has published, in a series of Letters to Mr. BENNET; whose *arguments* have been left unanswered in Mr. B.'s *Appendix*, amidst a very improper and undeserved severity of remark.

There is one passage, however, (p. 94—96.) not sufficiently noticed by Mr. GILBERT, which requires some animadversion. "In your statement of the causation of sin as predicated of man," says Mr. B. "there seems to be great logical inaccuracy; in that the converse of your first proposition is not properly stated."

By

By "logical inaccuracy" Mr. B. must mean something in the statement that affects the *import* of the proposition; for he has too much good sense and learning to suppose that an author is obliged to wear the trammels of logical *forms*, in statements and reasonings. At that rate, every deviation in argument from figure and mood would be "logical inaccuracy;" and in order to be *logical* a man must be *pedantic*. The objection therefore must be against the *sense* of the second proposition. Now let us examine that sense, and see wherein it differs from what Mr. B. assigns it. My two explanatory propositions are these: "Freedom terminating on a good disposition, supported by sovereignty, produceth holy acts alone." Here, by the way, the reader should keep in mind that "freedom" is used for *free-will*, or the will considered as *free*; and the words "terminating on" contain a mathematical allusion to the formation of an angle by one line terminating on another. For as one line cannot form an angle, nor yet two lines when there is no terminating junction; so liberty alone, or the state of the mind alone, without a terminating junction, can produce no *moral effect*. Now what is the second proposition? It is this: "But a mind or disposition (i. e. *any* mind or disposition, however good) not supported by sovereignty, but left in equity to its native passive power, being now the subject, and freedom terminating upon it in that state, becomes instantly the seat of moral evil." These are the two propositions, expressed without the least intention of evading any difficulty, or of stating the latter as formally the converse of the former. How then would Mr. B. have it expressed? Thus; "but freedom, though terminating on a good disposition, if not supported by sovereignty, necessarily produceth evil only." If Mr. B. can gain any advantage from this mode of expression, he is welcome to it. But probably the impartial reader will judge with me that in point of argument he will not be benefited.

However,

However, Mr. BENNET'S grand objection to the statement in the second proposition is, that I ascribe to "mere sovereignty" what he apprehends to be "grounded in divine wisdom and equity." I allow, and maintain, no less than the objector, that it was wise, equitable, and becoming, for an accountable creature to be *formed* righteous, holy, and good. It is also allowed, that his righteousness, integrity, or perfection, could not depart from him but by the *free* act of his own will. Now what is the "moot point?" It is, to ascertain the *proper cause* why a perfect creature came to act morally wrong? Or, *Why* a temptation to evil, whether strong or weak, *succeeded* on the mind of a creature confessedly perfect? Instead of answering this question, Mr. B. contends that a perfect creature is *made* so in divine wisdom and equity! and that while he *continued* so, he was "not supported by sovereignty," but by "a becomingness and moral meetness in the conduct of GOD towards his accountable creatures." It seems then, as a fair consequence, that, as far as GOD is concerned in the business, when a perfect creature became sinful, the operations of wisdom, equity, becomingness and moral meetness were *suspended!*

Will Mr. BENNET contend, that though a *good* disposition was not *supported* by sovereignty, nor yet by *equity*, after it was first formed, yet the perfect creature *supported itself?* Surely not; for it would be to contend for the rankest Pelagianism that ever complimented a creature, or insulted sovereign grace. And yet, how can the consequence be avoided? There is but one way; and that is, that the *goodness* of a perfect creature, in every degree and in every period, is *supported by sovereignty*, or sovereign *benevolence*. If GOD were under obligation, either in wisdom, in equity, in becomingness, or in moral meetness, to *continue* the goodness once bestowed; it must have *always* remained unimpaired. But if the goodness first given did not *in fact* continue,

continue, and the divine character is infinitely remote from willing the *sinfulness* of sin, the perfect creature, it will be said, was *left to its own fate*, and it *happened* to fall! This will not suffice; it is to fly from the face of glorious truth to the gloomy covert of ignorance. *Happened* to fall! This is to transfer the *cause* of sin from *ourselves* to "the new goddess, *contingency*." And were this admitted, the converse of it must be admitted also; the perfect creature *happened* to continue good till it fell. *Happened* to continue! This also will not do; it is to offer incense to "the old idol *free will*," to place it on the throne of sovereign benevolence, and to acknowledge it as the *cause* of good and happiness to a perfect creature.

It has been observed before, that most of Mr. BENNET'S objections arise from a false apprehension of my terms; but it is fair to ask, Was he not at liberty to learn, without much trouble, whether that *sense* of terms which he adopted was *mine*? Was he not aware also, when about to print and publish those letters, that my life was despaired of by my friends; and that, for some time after, to engage in controversy, under any public pledge, might have cost me a dangerous relapse? Why then should he indulge complaints that a reply was made to his Letters by another hand, rather than my own? He was privately assured, that no want of personal respect, nor any affected contempt of his production, induced me to decline an immediate notice of it; and the real cause was thus assigned: "The precarious state of my health, *as I before stated to you*, together with the uniform advice of medical and other friends, prevented my engaging in any work which required close application of writing, or extra exercise of mind; especially so near the time when I had been violently attacked the two preceding winters. Your work therefore was to be answered by another, or not at all, on its first appearance."—Whatever view Mr.

Mr. BENNET is pleased to take of Mr. GILBERT as an opponent, I consider him as a very able advocate of gospel truth, and especially of consistent Calvinism; and his answer to Mr. BENNET, as far as argument is concerned, as a masterly performance.

Beside the *Appendix* to his Letters, so unworthy of his pen, Mr. BENNET has recently published "Thoughts on the primary condition of Intelligent accountable Creatures, &c.;" which he supposes, in his advertisement, "may furnish a positive substitute for that hypothesis against which the reasoning of his Remarks was directed." Here I expected to find a "digested view" of this respectable author's thoughts, something like a *consistent system;* but in this I was greatly disappointed: for very little appears beside an *avowal* of some important truths, and a modest *ignorance* of almost every point of difficulty; a *rehearsal* of old objections, already answered, in a form somewhat different; with a number of *references,* and *quotations* at the end, principally from TURRETIN, and a few from EDWARDS, CALVIN, BOSTON, AMES, WITSIUS, REYNOLDS, OWEN, and GUYSE, which in my view are very little to the main purpose.

Among the important points *avowed,* the following gave me no small pleasure: "The primary and essential cause of holiness in all intelligent creatures, is that influence which God imparts to their derived nature;" (p. 8.) and again, "these pure intelligences existed in a state of *dependence* on their Creator, and could not exercise their faculties and principles without influence from Him the infinite original essence." (p. 10.) But then it is soon added, "it is absurd to speak of their having a 'tendency to nihility, physically considered;' since the all-efficient will of Jehovah hath unchangeably established, as to all that stands connected with their physical existence, a *direct contrary* tendency." A singular argument;

argument; a creature has no tendency to nihility, *in itself* considered, because it has the contrary tendency from the will of *another!* Surely a physical tendency to exist by another's will, is not inconsistent with a metaphysical or hypothetical tendency to nihility.

However, it is further acknowledged, that, "although their concreated principles of action were habitually good, yet as they derived these, together with their being, from him the first cause of all things, and had their individual subsistence as created essences in a *dependence* upon him, as the fountain of life and goodness, these very habits or principles of action could only be cherished and kept in lively exercise, and in a full direction to their proper ends, by a *continued communication of holy influence* from himself; even as the living branches of a tree flourish and bear their fruit by means of a constant supply from the root, or from the soil through the medium of the root." (p. 12.) But it soon follows, "nor have we hitherto seen any thing *in their nature* and constitution, as holy perfect creatures, that should in the least militate against, or *indispose* them to, the fullest exercise of such moral dependence" as before described. If, however, there was nothing in *their nature*, nor yet in the nature of *God*, to indispose them to continue holy, it must have been *impossible* for them to change for the worse; which is offering defiance at once to sound reason and to matter of fact. For they *did* change for the worse, and there must have been a *cause* for it *in themselves*, except moral deterioration be impiously charged upon God. Were there no such *cause in themselves*, the non-communication of efficacious grace would not, could not, produce the effect; for no creature can change from holy to sinful but by his *own* act.

Mr. BENNET apprehends we have not "any substantial ground to suppose that Adam, after the first moment of his existence, was under any such positive divine

divine influence as efficaciously 'controlled' any one principle in his holy nature; any more than we have reason to imagine that there existed in his nature, as a pure and perfect creature, any principle, however latent, which *needed* such control." What is this, in effect, but saying, that by *chance* he stood, and by *chance* he fell? It is worthily acknowledged, respecting our first parents, that "there was much *grace* and *benignity* intermingled with the whole of that original constitution, under which they were placed as moral probationers;" (p. 20.)—and yet there was a "permission" of their defection, (p. 22.) Are we then to infer that they would *certainly* transgress, *if permitted?* or, that *perchance* they would fall? Is there any medium?—It is further urged, that if "any divine communication, which had been once imparted to the creature, was withdrawn, or withheld, antecedently to his abuse of liberty as a moral agent, the creature, from that moment, *ceased to be what he was*, when he came into existence." But "ceasing to be *what he was*," must not be confounded with his "ceasing to be *righteous*." The former might be, and he remain innocent and righteous; but the latter could take place only by his *own act*.

Mr. BENNET institutes a contrast, or some important difference, between "positive efficiency" and "divine communication;" and allows that the former might be suspended, but not the latter. His words are, "In respect of positive efficiency, and of that only, we may conceive of a suspension of divine influence, or rather we may call it the NON-EXERTION OF CONFIRMING GRACE." (p. 22.) But what is this "confirming grace?" The author had before stated (p. 9.) that "holiness in creatures, as arising from divine communication, may be viewed, either as a *transient effect*, or an *imparted principle* and moral habit of the mind." It is natural to ask, with which of these should "confirming grace" be classed? Is it a *transient effect?* or is it an *imparted princi-*

ple? If the *latter*, the author must contradict himself. If the *former*, it could not be *suspended*, for it was never *given*; except we say that *confirming* grace was given to creatures which at the same time were *permitted* to fall; which will be thought nothing short of a contradiction in terms. But perhaps Mr. B.'s meaning is, that the positive efficiency producing transient effects, *which would have confirmed* perfect creatures, was *not exerted*. If so, I have the pleasure to agree with him.

I must however enter a protest against the sentiment, that Adam had no "positive efficiency" given *him* for the production of *holy acts*, during his integrity; for reasons assigned in different parts of this publication. Not that I suppose a perfect creature's *will* is *controlled* in his holy acts; but rather, as repeatedly noticed, that his *nature* or state of mind, from which, or according to which the will *freely acts*, was the subject of positive influence, as the *sole cause* why the *free* will chose aright rather than amiss; or, which amounts to the same thing, why the soul's real good *appeared* to be so, and a creature whose views were limited, amidst an endless variety of comparative good, chose the right. Thus his acts were *strictly* his *own*, as being voluntary and uncontrolled; while the disposition, habit, or *nature* from whence they sprung was the effect of grace. I must also enter my protest against Mr. B's notion of "confirming grace," if thereby he means any thing different in its *nature* (as contradistinguished from *continuance* or *degree*) from what Adam had in his perfect state. If there be any difference allowed between what he calls "holiness as a *transient effect*," and "holiness as an *imparted principle*," each "arising from divine communication;" does that difference consist in the *nature* of the influence, in its *continuance*, or in its *degree*? If in the *first*, it should have been shewn from scripture, from principles of reason, or some source of evidence. If in either of the two last, we are agreed. Will it be said, that the *nature* of the

the "divine communication" must be different, since the *effects* are different? The argument is not good, except on supposition of *continued* sameness, or at least an *exact* similarity of state in the subject on whom it is conferred; which is not admitted.

A distinction, with respect to grace, far more important in my view, as well as more accurate, is that which divines have commonly denominated *objective* and *subjective*. These are perfectly and clearly distinct in their nature. The one consists in an *exhibition* of divine favour to the agent; the other, in a *communication* of holy influence. The former is the instrument of moral government, the latter is the process of sovereign grace. But to denominate a variety of *holy* divine communications by "that sort of momentary impulse, or fleeting impression, which leaves no fixedness of character, or well grounded sentiment in the mind," and "a congeniality of the mental state with the nature of truth, and with the obligation and reasonableness of duty;" appears to me neither just nor useful. Is the *continuance* of the "congeniality" in question maintained, or is it conceivable that it should be maintained, except by a "momentary impulse," after the manner of providential sustentation? Nay, was it not providential sustentation itself? Is it not very generally if not universally allowed, that as "providence is as it were a continued creation," so it extends to well-being or holiness no less than to personal existence? Mr. B. however supposes that there is a "distinction to be made, between the sustentation of providence, and the efficiency of grace." In one respect, indeed, this may be allowed, but not in another. To *sustain* or continue concreated holiness (except *peradventure* it could continue *of itself*) must have been an act of *providence*, including what is expressed by "the efficiency of grace." But when this last phrase is made to signify divine energy, "quickening those who were dead in trespasses and sins," it resembles more an act of

creation than the operation of providence. But the *continued* support of *this* divine life, as well as the other, must be a *providential* operation. As to give original existence and form is *creation*; so, to continue that which exists already is the function of *providence*, whatever be the object.

Speaking of intelligent creatures in a state of original probation, Mr. B. very justly remarks, "it cannot be inferred from any sound principles of reason or justice, that the divine author of their being was any way obliged to deal with them in a way of *benevolence only*." Very true; for then they would not have failed in their allegiance. But if "benevolence only" was not *due* to them, it deserves our serious consideration *how much* benevolence was their due? This is not the place for discussing the question; and it has been considered in the Essay. One thing, however, may be observed, that I believe they were favoured with *more benevolence*, grace, and benignity, than Mr. B. is willing to allow them. For, I maintain that they had not only *objective* grace in its fullest conceivable extent, without any subduction, but also, while they stood, *efficacious influence*, by virtue of which they exercised all holy affections; whereas he only considers them "as originally possessing concreated principles of moral rectitude, *without any positive divine influence* absolutely determining their proper exercise." Is not this to say, in effect, that there was *no more* benevolence shewn them than was their *creation-due*? Also, that in the *exercise* of their concreated holiness, while it lasted, they were supplied from some inexplicable *self-sufficiency*? This respectable author lays great stress on the circumstance, that no "divine communication, which had been once imparted to the creature, was *withdrawn*, or withheld, antecedently to the abuse of liberty." But is not such communication *for a season*, even during the whole term of rectitude, better than *none*? If no such influence was given *at all*, as he maintains,

maintains, it is plain it was not *due* to them; and if they had determining influence, for a season, it was the fruit of *pure benevolence.* Now if it be a reflection on the divine character to afford such influence *only for a season,* how much more so, not to afford it *at all?* The fact is, that in *neither* case does it imply any reflection on the divine character; but according to the sentiment of determining influence as a necessary predisposing cause of holy exercises, *more benevolence* is shewn than in the other case.

However, our author is not accurate when he ascribes to my sentiments "a *sovereign* withholding of confirming grace from creatures in a state of moral probation;" (p. 54.) for what I maintain is "an *equitable* withholding" of that grace which would have confirmed them. For sovereignty, which implies in my view of it a supreme right of exercising benevolence *ad extra,* has for its object exclusively the creature's *welfare.* Nor is he more accurate when he imputes to my creed "a *withdrawment* of *all* that influence which was the sole and exclusive cause of their holiness." I do not believe that there was *any* "withdrawment" as contradistinguished from "withholding." To *withdraw* properly implies an *aptitude to continue* in the thing withdrawn; or that it *would remain* were it not for the withdrawment; independently of his will who withdraws. Thus water communicated to a reservoir, or money deposited in a bank. But benevolent influence leaves no such stock, which might remain, detached from the will which imparted it. Such influence may be compared rather to a fountain communicating a running stream; which *withdraws* no part of what has already flowed, when it *withholds* a future supply. Or it resembles a beam of light emitted by the sun, which is not capable of being *withdrawn,* though its continuance may be *withheld.* When used in a lax manner, the two terms may be taken interchangeably; as when we say, a person *withdraws* a stated con-

tribution or a wonted favour. But the meaning evidently is, *withholds* the future, but not *recalls* the past. It is, as TURRETTIN expresses it, " subtractio, non *privativa*, quum Deus gratiam antea datam tollit; sed NEGATIVA, quum non dat *novam* gratiam ad perstandum necessariam."

Nor is it at all essential to my argument that ALL sovereign influence (however equitable that would have been) was suspended or not exerted, at the commencement of moral evil; because not giving what would *in fact* overcome the temptation is all that it requires. As to what some have expressed by the term " creation-due," meaning original righteousness and holiness, to *withdraw* it was *impossible* from the nature of the case; for this was the very thing which they were to preserve, or not to preserve, as moral probationers. And indeed for God to *withdraw* it (were such a thing conceivable) would be the same as to discharge them from all *obligation to preserve* it.

Mr. B. says, respecting the point wherein he *supposes* me to differ from the authors he quotes, " It is *one of the most objectionable* parts of Dr. WILLIAMS's hypothesis, respecting the origin of moral evil, that he introduceth—a *withdrawment of all* that influence which was the sole and exclusive cause of their holiness, while they stood in uprightness, and this antecedently to their abuse of liberty." I have already observed that his statement is not accurate; but as he lays so much stress on this point, it may be proper to shew that his *own* account of influence affords him no relief. For illustration, let his *own degree* of benevolent influence afforded to a perfect creature be represented by the number *seven*, let the force of temptation stand for *eight*, and his confirming grace not given stand for *nine*. It plainly follows that his *own degree* is not efficiently adequate any more than if *none* had been given. So that were I to maintain this last idea (which I do not) it would not be more infallibly connected

connected with the event of transgression than what he himself maintains.

Mr. BENNET seems to object to any sentiment which makes "God's act the *occasion* of the creature's sin;" but with what propriety it is difficult to guess. Does not this objection recoil upon himself? He maintains a "withholding of confirming grace;" and is not this the equitable *occasion* of transgression? And is not the greatest instance of benevolence that ever was conferred by the Almighty upon the world, an *occasion* of aggravated transgression? The gift of his Son, and the preaching of the gospel, is a full proof of it.

Aware, it seems, that the charge of making the creature *self-sufficient* would be brought against him, Mr. BENNET contends for "a *derived dependent sufficiency* for what was required of them as moral agents, if duly exercised and improved." Sufficiency and insufficiency are very equivocal terms. Properly, to be derived and dependent are characters of *insufficiency;* but in a *comparative* sense, what is insufficient for one thing may be said to be sufficient for another thing. To be sufficient as an *efficient cause* is one thing; but to be sufficient for *moral agency* is another. Were not this the fact, there could be but one moral agent in the universe; for it is abundantly demonstrable that there is but one efficient positive cause. What is really *sufficient* to constitute moral agency and accountableness, I have shewn elsewhere; in my notes on EDWARDS, and at the beginning of this work. To constitute *sufficiency*, in a proper sense, there should be the characters of underived and independent existence. When speaking of God's "*infinity* of moral excellence," our author adds, "The creature's inadequacy to *this*, therefore, is not strictly and properly to be viewed as an essential defect of his nature; otherwise every work of God had been necessarily imperfect." But is not this inference an important truth, reflecting the highest honour on Jehovah? Compared with him, is not

every work of his *necessarily* imperfect? The truth is, there is a great difference between possessing a nature both *essentially* and *comparatively* defective; and possessing a nature defective as to *due* perfection. To possess the *former*, is to be the subject of imperfect existence, which some call "metaphysical evil," and others "passive power;" and to possess the *latter*, is to be the subject of moral evil, or a defection from perfect virtue. And as it is the glory of Jehovah to be free from the former by *absolute necessity*, and as the removal of it from other beings is no *object* of choice; so it is his glory to *continue* or to *restore* the latter, namely *due* perfection of nature.

Most cordially, however, do I agree with my respectable opponent, that creatures possessed of due perfection "were under no positive influence *ab extra*, either from the decretive will of God, or from the effective energy of his providence, impelling them to any sinful volitions." (p. 30.) But when he speaks of their *conduct*, including the *goodness* of it, as "*self-determined*," I am constrained to dissent, for the reasons before adduced in my answers to WHITBY and FLETCHER. And when he speaks of their having nothing in *their nature* but what might "*with high probability* have terminated in their adherence to virtue and happiness;" it is but fair to ask, *whose nature*, or from what *cause* was it, then, that they went *contrary* to this "high probability," and actually failed "in their adherence to virtue and happiness?" We agree that it was not from God? was it then from *chance?* Mr. B. does not call in question "the eventual *certainty* of the creature's defection;" is *chance* then a cause of *certainty?* The truth is, that the absurdities and contradictions arising from a denial of the creature's passive power, both as to being and well-being, are endless. However, in the following statement we harmoniously accord, "that God's foreknowledge, simply considered, had not the least causal influence on the

the declination of the creature's mind from a state of perfect rectitude." (p. 33.) And yet there *was* a causal influence somewhere—yea, it was in the creature *himself*—and it is capable of innumerable *demonstrations*, (those I mean which are called *reductio ad absurdum*) that nothing in a creature *could* have such causal influence but his *passive power* in connection with his *free will*.

Before I conclude my Remarks on Mr. BENNET's "Thoughts," one thing more (which I have also hinted at in the Preface) may be noticed, *viz.* That there is a great distinction between the *modus* of sin's origination and the *cause* of it. This is probably one reason why the subject has been thought by many to be *incapable* of a satisfactory solution. But the difference is wide and essential. The *mode* of sin's origin must be collected from revealed data and probable inference only; it is not the subject of demonstrative evidence, properly speaking. Where the scripture is silent, the argument, if we argue at all, must needs be, from the nature of the subject, only conjectural. And this, no doubt, is the chief reason why it is inferred by my respected opponent and others, that an investigation of the subject, and even a convincing proof of it, if possible, is of no great use. On this point there is no ground of difference. The comparative importance of such a discovery would be small, though the result of the most laborious and successful enquiry. For what is the knowledge of the *manner* and circumstances of a fact, compared with the knowledge of its *cause*; any further than as the former might *assist* the latter. But when a *cause* of such radical importance is discovered, it opens to us a new scene, it exhibits to us wonderful truths as inseparably connected with it, truths of the greatest interest and the most beneficial nature, as I have endeavoured to shew in my "Conclusion." But what I wish may be particularly noticed is, that the *cause* or true origin of a fact may be capable of the

the strictest demonstration, while the *mode* of the same fact may remain in much obscurity. And this I maintain is the case as to the fact of sin's origination. It would be easy to illustrate this remark as to other subjects. For instance, the *manner* of divine holy influence on the mind, and of providential sustentation of our being and well-being must be collected from sacred writ, and probable inference from revealed *data*, and after all the subject may remain in much obscurity; but the *cause* of these important facts is capable of *demonstrative* evidence. Hence our Lord's remark to Nicodemus, that the *mode* of the Spirit's operation on the mind may remain obscure, while the cause is decidedly divine influence. From the *effects* we may demonstrate the cause, though not the manner. Again, the *modus* of the world's *formation* must be gathered from revealed *data* and probable conjecture, and after all our conjectures, a veil of impenetrable difficulty may continue over it; and therefore to bestow much time and pains upon the investigation is not a mark of true wisdom, any further than as it contributes to discover the cause. And yet who, except Athiests and Sceptics, can question that the *true cause* of the world's formation is capable of metaphysical demonstration? that is, the greatest certainty conceivable, and of which mathematical evidence itself is but a branch.—I hope my learned and respected opponent will consider my remarks with candour, and rest assured of my friendly regards.

The next author who has thought proper to attack my argument for the origin of moral evil being found *exclusively in ourselves*, and not at all in our Maker, was the Rev. WILLIAM PARRY, in what he denominates, "Strictures on the Origin of Moral Evil, &c." This learned and respectable gentleman also has my grateful acknow-

acknowledgements for professions of respect; but his manner of treating the subject is at least equally exceptionable with that of Mr. BENNET, and in some respects much more so. As the "Strictures" were not addressed to me, any more than to the public at large, they were open to observation from any person who should think proper to reply. This is now done by the Rev. THOMAS HILL, in his "Animadversions" lately published.—While due candour and decorum are preserved in the discussion, I hope that religion and moral science will be advanced by it; and especially that the *true ground* of the acknowledged axioms—"All good is from God"—and, "All moral evil is from ourselves"—will become more familiar to the thoughtful and devout christian.

Another publication which has echoed the popular cry, that the subject is inscrutable, and not much calculated for the purposes of practical godliness, is the THEOLOGICAL REVIEW. The anonymous critic displays some candour, and gives conciliating expressions of respect, in his opposition to my sentiments, while reviewing Mr. BENNET's "Remarks," Mr. PARRY's "Strictures," and Mr. GILBERT's "Reply" to Mr. BENNET.* Observing in the first of these critiques some *wrong statements* of my views, I thought it but justice to myself and to what I deem to be important truth, to take some notice of them by writing to the Editor of that work, through the medium of the Publisher: and as representations equally unfair and injurious were *repeated*, I renewed my remonstrances. Some of these were candidly inserted, but the last letter was suppressed. As the material parts of the *whole* of them will not occupy much room, as they may cast some additional light on my real sentiments, and

* In the Numbers for February, May, and June, 1808.

and as my friends may wish to see them all at one view, I regard them as a suitable close to this Appendix.

LETTER I.

SIR,

The Reviewer of "Remarks on a recent Hypothesis, respecting the Origin of Moral Evil, &c." has conveyed some ideas to the public which want to be rectified. When he says, that I am "an advocate for *many* of those doctrines which are generally called calvinistic," it might be inferred, that I hold *some* doctrines which are not so denominated. I am not conscious of holding *any* which are inconsistent with the doctrinal articles of the church of England, or that beautiful summary of christian doctrines, the shorter Assembly's Catechism. The Reviewer asserts, that I "differ from Calvinists respecting the Origin of Moral Evil." This is not accurate; I agree with the major part of authors who are so termed, *as far as they go;* particularly TURRETTIN, WITSIUS, STAPFERUS, OWEN, GOODWIN, HOWE, EDWARDS, &c. &c. Many Calvinists have indeed thrown out hints with a "perhaps," that "this is a problem, all the difficulties of which will never be removed in the present state," as the Reviewer has done; but surely, while I establish no principles, and assume no *data*, but what all consistent Calvinists admit, this ground is too slight to support his assertion. To point out the wrong inferences that some draw from their own premises, and to establish legitimate conclusions, cannot with the least accuracy or propriety be termed a difference with regard to *doctrine*. It is no part of my present design to expose the mistakes into which Mr. BENNET has fallen in his letters addressed to me, through an entire misconception of my *terms*, and consequently of my arguments; but I must entreat your indulgence to a few strictures on the conduct of the Reviewer in introducing a quotation from Dr. OWEN, as if inconsistent with my sentiments. The Doctor's argument is forcible against the following doctrine of ARMINIUS;

MINIUS; "*Inclinatio ad peccandum ante lapsum in homine fuit, licet non ita vehemens ac inordinata ut nunc est;*" and which is conveyed in different words by CORVINUS. But I deny that any thing maintained or ever published by me, is either consistent with what ARMINIUS held, or inconsistent with Dr. OWEN's doctrine implied in the quotation. There is indeed a similarity of *sound*, but not of *sense*, between some of my terms and those on which Dr. O. animadverts. The reasoning is conclusive against a voluntary, a physical, or a concreated *inclination;* but not so against hypothetical *certainty*, a metaphysical *tendency*, or a deficient *cause* of mutability. What I contend for is, that defectibility *itself* does not arise from chance, but from an assignable cause as well as indefectibility. On that assignation is established a fair solution, or what I have ventured to call a demonstration of the problem, *Whence comes moral evil?* I fully acquiesce in the sentiment of the Reviewer, that "the origin of evil is a subject which ought never to be conversed about in a light and thoughtless manner, &c." but can by no means allow that it ought to be viewed, as insinuated by some, in any other light than what is highly interesting to the cause of godliness and real virtue. In my view, the *true solution* of the question includes the very essence of *self-knowledge*, *humility*, and *gratitude*.

On the whole, the Reviewer seems not to comprehend the nature of my argument and the real ideas contained in the terms I have employed. By inserting these remarks in your next number, you will oblige, Sir, your most obedient, E. WILLIAMS.

Rotherham, Feb. 11, 1808.

LETTER II.

SIR,

The Reviewer in reply to my observation, "that I was not conscious of holding *any* doctrines inconsistent with the Assembly's Catechism, &c." brings forward two specific

specific charges, in evidence of my having abandoned *some* calvinistic doctrines.

The first is, "That man, in his state of innocence, possessed such an universal rectitude of all the faculties of the soul, as to have no tendency of *any* kind to evil; and that while he continued in that state, he was able to perform all the duties which were required of him." On this charge, I beg leave to make a few remarks. (1.) This proposition is so worded, as to include something which *all* consistent Calvinists hold; and something which *none* of them do. The truth of this remark I hope to substantiate in what follows. (2.) I firmly believe, with all Calvinists, "That man in his state of innocence possessed *universal rectitude* of all the faculties of the soul." For the divine record testifies that man was made "in the image of God;" or, as the same record explains it, "in righteousness and true holiness." And this, I apprehend, includes that he was perfectly *sinless;* that he had no *sinful* bias, bent, inclination, or tendency whatever. He was *made* upright; his righteousness and holiness were *concreated* with him; not *first* made a creature, and *afterwards* made holy. He knew God and himself clearly; loved God with all his heart, and every other lovely object for his sake; and was therefore profoundly humble, warmly grateful, and promptly obedient. (3.) I believe, with all consistent Calvinists, "that whilst he continued in that state he was *able* to perform *all* the duties which were required of him," in their explained sense of *ability*. No one, without impiety, much less a consistent Calvinist, can say that man was *independently* able. He was able with divine assistance; by participation. To ascribe to him ability beyond this, is to fix him on an equal throne with him whose name is Jehovah. He had the *ability* of choosing the objects which appeared in his view the best for him; of adopting without any *foreign constraint* the means of his own happiness. But as man's ability

ability was *derived*, it needed support. Therefore, (4.) The Reviewer is under a great mistake in supposing man "to have no tendency of *any* kind to evil" to be a Calvinistic doctrine. Where is an author to be found, British or foreign, owned as a brother by the denomination in question, who maintains, that Adam's ability to act well, was *unsupported* by a cause distinct from, and infinitely above him? But if there was not a tendency of *some* kind, what need was there of *support?* The ideas of support without need, or of need without *any* tendency, are perfectly incompatible.

Some indeed have attempted an objection to this most important branch of calvinistic doctrine, by making a difference between a support of our *physical* powers and of a good disposition. They who admit the former, but deny the latter, are as remote from Calvinism, as they are from scripture and reason. Was not a "good disposition," concreated with man, a part of his *physical* existence? From the manner in which some people talk of *physical powers*, and *moral powers*, they afford great room to suspect, that they "know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm." Is not *every* power of the soul a *physical* power? If any power could deserve the name of *moral*, it would be the *will*; but is it not obvious, that the will is only a physical power, though capable of producing *moral effects?* The supposition that the soul has *two sets* of powers, the one physical and the other moral, has no foundation in truth. In a less accurate sense, indeed, the *state of the mind* has been called *moral*, when only considered as good *antecedent* to all acts; but if we consult the truth of *ideas*, *morality* is the *manner* of action. The action abstracted from the manner, has no moral quality. But because an action is called *good* when conformable to rectitude, and *good* also (or a degree of happiness) is the result of a right *manner* of choosing; hence many confound antecedent *goodness* and *morality*. The poverty of language, also, betrays men

men into an error when they want to contrast physical goodness, in the common acceptation of the term, with that state of mind which is inseparably connected with right volitions. Hence, for the want of due consideration, has an outcry been made against a phrase I have used, in accounting for the origin of evil; "a tendency to defection morally considered." The nature of the argument shews, that I was speaking of a tendency *antecedent* to choice; and therefore it could not possibly have a *moral* character. When I say "morally considered," who but those who seek occasion to excite popular prejudice, would suppose that I could mean any thing else than to characterize the kind of *defection*, and not the kind of *tendency*, by these words? Annihilation being one *kind* of defection, and moral evil another, what I designed to assert is, that man had need of support in BOTH respects; that he could no more be *self-sufficient* in the one case than in the other.

Much has been said about *moral* ability and inability; but in my view the term *moral* thus connected, is not well adapted to convey the ideas designed. For if moral *ability* be made to express a good *antecedent* state of the mind, and if morality be the *manner* in which the will attaches itself to an object of choice, that ability, however excellent, cannot, in strictness, be called *moral*, except as the effect of a former choice. The same distinction is applicable to moral *inability*. An antecedent state of the mind can be termed "*moral* inability" only as it is the effect of a perverted choice; but that kind of inability which is antecedent to *all* choice cannot be *moral*. Hence, a tendency to evil in a perfect nature, *cannot* be a *morally evil tendency*. These remarks have been occasioned by the Reviewer's questions, "Wherein, we ask, does this tendency to moral evil differ from a *bias* to sin?"—"Is not a tendency to moral evil," an anomie, and so *a thing sinful*?" What I believe and assert is, that man, in the most perfect state conceivable,

needed

needed *support* for the *goodness* of his disposition, concreated with him, no less than for his existence. To suppose him supported as to his being, but not as to his goodness, in order to secure a happy result of his moral acts, is both antiscriptural and irrational; and in fact is nothing but the old Pelagian heresy, so often and so successfully refuted. And if his *good disposition* required *support*, what would be the consequence, if God thought it right not to afford it, beyond a certain degree, in the hour of temptation? As a *motive* was proposed by the tempter, and man's good disposition was such only while supported; and as that support could be only in the way of *benevolent influence* antecedent to all choice; there remains no assignable reason why the support by such influence, should be stronger or weaker than the temptation; why Adam should be victorious or vanquished; but the *sovereign pleasure of God.* If God was *obligated*, on any consideration whatever, to support him from yielding to the tempter, he would have *done* it; but he *did not;* therefore his fall was equally *certain* and *equitable.* With God, *fact* and *right* coincide.

Words are very imperfect vehicles of thought, however well chosen, when we want to express any thing out of the familiar routine of ideas; but when words are defined, and definitions are given in different words and forms, all concurring to express the same idea; and when words capable of different interpretations, are limited by the nature of the subject; it seems a peculiar infelicity that no explanation succeeds. How could the Reviewer, or any candid, intelligent person confound my use of the words "tendency to defection" with a "sinful tendency," or with any thing inconsistent with Calvinism? I confess it is inconsistent with the latitudinarian *self-sovereignty* of the will, *uninfluenced* by the previous state of the mind in its elections; and the *self-sufficiency* of man to preserve his rectitude. Let any one come fairly forward, and own God's absolute sovereignty

in preserving, as well as in imparting the *goodness* of all creatures; and that divine *favour alone* is the cause of their continued goodness; or, which amounts to the same thing in idea, let him own the *absolute dependence* (in a passive sense) of a perfect creature for his goodness, on the sovereign pleasure of God;—and I can easily overlook all smaller differences. The truth is, that many wish to be thought Calvinists, while they deny this fundamental and most important principle of the denomination. The view I hold of the origin of sin, brings the creature too low, exalts grace too high, and stands too closely connected with predestination to life, to be relished by those who call themselves "*moderate* Calvinists." Nor can it be relished by the mere philosophical necessitarians, who ascribe good and evil *alike* to God, and thereby, in effect, deny the very existence of a moral system, and the distinctive characters of sin and holiness, virtue and vice. But I am fully persuaded, the more the sentiment here stated is fairly examined, and fully understood, the more will it appear that the life and soul of true, *experimental godliness* is involved in it.—I remain, Sir, your most obedient,

E. WILLIAMS.

Rotherham, March 10, 1808.

LETTER III.

SIR,

The other charge adduced by the Reviewer is, that I renounce the following Calvinistic doctrine—"That the divine purpose or plan comprehends all events." This doctrine, however, I believe in the fullest sense, and sincerely rejoice in it. I believe there is no *act* whatever of a free agent, past, present, or to come, which is not comprehended in the divine purpose. But it is the peculiar advantage of the sentiment I defend, to do this without ascribing to God the *sinfulness* of those acts. This is what all consistent Calvinists are solicitous to maintain;

maintain; and when the assembly of divines state, that God has "foreordained whatsoever comes to pass," all judicious expositors of their meaning carefully observe this distinction. All acts are worthy of the divine concurrence, and therefore of the divine purpose; but it is utterly abhorrent from scripture, reason, and piety, to say that he has purposed the sinfulness of *any* act, tho' that also is under his absolute controul, and from eternity foreseen in its deficient cause. Beside, the assembly explain their doctrine, when they say, "Our first parents being *left* to the *freedom* of their own will, sinned:" words without meaning if God purposed the *sinfulness* of the acts of free agents. The moral evil which attaches to any act is *equitably permitted*, though it might have been *sovereignly prevented*; and is thus permitted for the glorious and everlasting display of justice and of mercy.

The quotations from Dr. OWEN and Mr. GALE so far from *opposing* my statement, plainly express it *as far as they go*. I fully believe with Dr. OWEN that "nature and grace before the fall complied in a sweet union and harmony in the way of obedience." Man then had a steady, VOLUNTARY *tendency* to all that was right and good: yet neither Dr. OWEN nor any other consistent Calvinist maintains, that either man or angel was not LIABLE to evil of two kinds—*annihilation* and *defection*. To a perfect moral agent annihilation would be a great *evil*; and yet if there were no LIABILITY, no hypothetical *tendency* to this evil, he could need no *support*, no *preservation* in being. Again, that perfect man was LIABLE to *moral defection*, is sufficiently evidenced by the *mere fact* of his actual defection. He sinned, and was therefore *liable* to sin; nor could he be thus liable without some *cause* of it. This cause must be either in God or in *himself*. If in God, it must be from his decree, and whatever he decreed he *effects*. Now to effect any thing by an act of the *will* (implied in decree) is to be the *author* of that thing. For the will of God to be in the

wrong manner of the act, is to make God the *author* of the vitiosity and blameworthiness as well as of the physical part of the act. From such premises the irresistible inference would be, that, no moral alternative being left, man's *freedom* would be destroyed, and the necessitated sin must attach to HIM whose will was *most free* in the defection of the choice.—Moreover, if the cause of *liability* to evil be in MAN, it must be in him either as a positive or negative cause. Not *positive*, for that would destroy his moral alternative, his freedom and accountability; would make God the impelling agent, and man only his *mere instrument*, in the *evil* of his deeds. God being the author of our active nature, if his predetermining influence be no more in the goodness of volitions, than in the evil of them, he would be as much the source of evil as of good;—a notion which no pious mind can admit, and which is replete with contradictions.

The cause of liability to sin in man, is therefore *negative;* and must needs be the *state* of his mind considered as *absolutely dependent* for his determining goodness on that Being who alone is self-existent, independent, and all-sufficient. This liability to defection, arising from our *deficient* nature alone, I have called (and every consistent Calvinist may safely call it), in a metaphysical sense, a *tendency* to defection; and I will venture to say that the denial of it is attended with manifest absurdity. It is allowed that man did *actually sin;* now if this took place without *any* tendency, then here is an effect without a cause. To say that it sprung from *free will*, unconnected with and uninfluenced by the *deficient* cause before mentioned; would be to make God the author and *primary* agent in moral evil: for, he being the author of the *active* power, and his concourse and energy alone supporting and directing the physical part of every action, it would follow irrefragably, that God would be the moral agent in the evil. Where the *manner* of the act, as well as the act itself, is of divine positive

positive appointment and causation, *morality* in the creature is excluded; and moral good and evil are but names without signification. On the other hand, let that deficient passive cause, which is implied in every dependent nature, be taken into the account, and we have an *adequate* cause to produce the effect: a *cause* which, though negative, is an infallible ground of certainty and prescience. Were the true cause of the first perversion of choice of an active nature, it could be traced from man up to God; but being passive and negative, it cannot possibly have a higher origin than contingent or dependent existence.

With whatever important truth of divine revelation we connect the present view of SIN and its ORIGIN, it will be uniformly found a doctrine according to *godliness*. Through this medium we see the full extent of these edifying truths—"all good is from God alone," and "all evil is from ourselves alone"—truths of radical importance in *every christian's experience*. Enabled, thro' sovereign grace, to exercise faith on the divine testimony, to receive the Saviour as held forth in the gospel, and walk in him with loving and grateful obedience, we are further invited, by a just view of the origin of moral evil, to a most interesting and profitable acquaintance with the ineffable glories of the *divine character*. In the plan of salvation revealed in the gospel; in each particular doctrine; in God's covenant and his dispensations; in the grounds of moral obligation, and the nature of penal sanctions; we behold an additional beauty. We may see how the several parts of true *moral science* harmoniously accord with evangelical truth; we have a radical principle by means of which to detect and expose innumerable *heretical errors*, and advantageously to establish every truth of the gospel; and particularly we more clearly behold the *nature* of *sin*, and of equitable *suffering* as the effect of sin. By such contemplations every christian temper is invigorated; and the necessity

of a simple, humble dependence on God, in the way of his appointment, appears with brighter evidence. The life of faith becomes doubly important; while self-knowledge, humility, profound reverence, and the most unreserved resignation of our all into the custody and protection of the infinitely amiable Jehovah, through time and eternity, are abundantly encouraged and advanced.—I am, Sir, your's,

E. WILLIAMS.

Rotherham, April 8, 1808.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

I did not intend to trouble you any more in this way; but the same reason still existing in your last number (for May) I am constrained to solicit your insertion of a few lines. My design is not to vindicate my sentiments or modes of expression, but to undeceive your readers by substituting my *real* sentiments, instead of what the Reviewer, after Mr. PARRY, "thinks" to be mine. The first charge, indeed, is of less moment than some others, but as it tends to excite prejudice (*which* I do not say was *designed* by the Reviewer) it is of some importance.

When speaking of CALVIN, TURRETTIN, WITSIUS, and GALE, he adds, "we regret that Dr. W. has *abandoned* their luminous language." This is not the fact; for when these writers, or any others, use appropriate language, I am not conscious that I ever use a different "dialect" in expressing the *same* ideas. If indeed it be unlawful to acquire and express any *new* ideas, to depart from their "luminous language" is matter of regret; but to use their words, precisely in their sense, when ideas are *different*, would be a mode of improving science equally novel and censurable.

The Reviewer says, "We *think* that it is the *opinion* of Dr. W. that holiness is not due to a creature, as a creature,

creature, but after having entered on a state of probation." This is *not* my opinion, in the objectionable sense of this representation; tho' in one sense it is mine, as it must be that of every person of reflection, and the Reviewer himself of course. An apostate angel is a creature; and if holiness is due to a creature "*as a creature*," it must be due to *him*, which is absurd. But the connection shews that the Reviewer intends a creature *at the moment of creation*. But so far am I from supposing "that if God dealt with them in strict equity, the whole intelligent creation would have been *created* destitute of holiness, and therefore miserable," that I think the very reverse to be the truth, and that the supposition appears neither scriptural nor consistent with just views of either equity or sovereignty. To make an intelligent, accountable, immortal creature miserable without his own fault, would in my view be inconsistent with moral government, and no part of supreme dominion.

The Reviewer seems to confound my use of the term "inevitable" as to *argument*, and "inevitable" as to *choice*. Surely a *consequence* may be properly expressed by the words inevitable, unavoidable, certain, necessary, infallible, or any others expressing a connection that exists between that consequence and an antecedent, however evitable or avoidable the consequence might have been with respect to the *manner* of the choice itself, as perfectly free, IF the agent pleased. Though Adam did not sin *against* his will, but *by* its exercise, yet this is no good reason why any term whatever, expressive of the strongest connection between the antecedent and its consequence may not be used.

E. WILLIAMS.

May 20, 1808.

The above letter not appearing in the number for June, I was given to understand, that if I had any further communication to make, on a review contained in

that Number of "Mr. GILBERT's Reply to Mr. BENNET," both would probably be inserted in the next. Accordingly I sent to the publisher the following Remarks as a continuation of the former; but the insertion was declined. It is therefore here given as

LETTER V.

SIR,

In your 6th Number, for June, the Reviewer asks, whether passive power ought to be called a "natural evil?" The term "natural," in that connection, is used according to the common distribution of evils, as either *moral* or *natural*, that is, any evil which is *not moral*; and not according to the more philosophical distribution of evils into *physical*, *moral*, and *metaphysical*. But in strictness, passive power is *metaphysical* evil; as frequently used by foreign philosophers and divines. But the Reviewer asks, "Is it an evil, in any sense, for a creature not to be God?" That it is an *evil*, in a *comparative* sense, is as true, as that to possess being without it is a *good*. By English authors, it is called the evil of *imperfection*, and the evil of *imperfect existence*: and as its opposite requires praise, so this demands self-abasement.—It is again asked, "Can a holy God create an unholy creature?" No. "Or can he, by ceasing to support its holiness, reduce a creature which has never sinned, to a state of unholiness?" In this question, several things are blended, which ought to be kept separate. It consists of three parts. 1. Is it worthy of God to reduce a creature to a state of unholiness? No. 2. Can a creature, which has never sinned, be reduced to unholiness, by any other way than by a voluntary act? No. 3. Is the ceasing to support its holiness the cause why a creature sins? No. What then is the cause? Its *passive power* and *free will*. And no surer does a right line, terminating on another right line, form an angle, than the union of these, without sovereign grace, generates

ates *moral imperfection.* Hence the supposition blended with the Reviewer's question, that "ceasing to support" would be the *cause* of "reducing a creature to a state of unholiness," even without its own fault, implies a total misconception of my sentiments.

The Reviewer again states, "Support may be admitted, and yet tendency may be denied." Yes, it may be denied; but not with truth and evidence. The appeal is made to common sense, whether support be *needed*, where there is no tendency to a different state? Let common sense decide.—But another question, connected with an erroneous view of my sentiments, is, "Whether the Divine Being, if a holy creature never offended him, could, consistently with his moral perfections, *cease to conserve* its holiness?" If "ceasing to conserve its holiness" mean anything different from *permitting it to sin*, the meaning is beyond my present ken. I suppose that this *is* the sense. But is it *good* sense? The question, in fact, is this: Could the Divine Being *permit* a holy creature to sin, "if this holy creature never offended him?" It seems, then, that a creature first *sins*, before he is *permitted* to sin!—The Reviewer proposes an amendment of my phrase "tendency to moral defection," by another, viz. "tendency to want of holiness prior to the first sin." Had he comprehended my meaning, he could never have made such a proposal;—I was going to say, had he comprehended his own meaning. "Want of holiness prior to the first sin!" Does any one comprehend it? Is it comprehensible? But "tendency to moral defection" is not liable to such inconsistency. Moral defection is an *effect* of some *cause;* and that cause, be it what it may, if common sense may judge, has a *tendency* to produce that effect. The Reviewer evidently has not yet divested himself of the false notion, that all tendency must possess a *physical* character, and therefore is ultimately reducible to the divine will. Until, however, he can rise superior to this prejudice, he is not qualified to investigate

investigate the origin of evil. He attempts a solution of the difficulty thus: "In the hour of combat, Adam possessed all the holiness and wisdom which were concreated with him; but they were finite, and external temptation, being mightier than they, prevailed: Adam, in consequence, voluntarily sinned." If this can satisfy any, as a solution of the problem, I do not envy them their satisfaction. I am satisfied with it too, as a *truism*: but does it fairly meet the question, What was the true *cause* why temptation *prevailed?* To say that Adam's holiness and wisdom were *finite* is no sufficient reason; for so they were during the time he stood, and so they are now. What inconsistency is there between being *finite* and being *morally perfect?* There are, I believe, but two things conceivable, by which Adam could be influenced, exclusive of the external object and his free will: the one, concreated holiness; the other, his passive power. Without his free will, he could not sin. Now which of these two principles contributed to his wrong choice? Was it concreated holiness? Absurd. Or was it passive power? Yea. That is, turn the subject which way you please, and view it in whatever light, it still appears, that the true origin of moral evil is *passive power united with liberty*; or, *liberty under the influence of passive power*: In other words, the reason why the free will of a perfect creature chose morally wrong, was, the influence of passive power. And I will venture to say, that every other attempt of solving the awful problem, is fairly reducible to an absurdity.—Had the R. understood me and TURRETTIN, he could not have put this question: Is not the passage out of TURRETTIN "in direct opposition to Dr. W.'s hypothesis?" No. It is perfectly consistent, *as far as it goes.* TURRETTIN properly states, that "*new* grace, necessary for his support, was not given" to Adam. But neither this nor any thing else advanced by that valuable writer fairly meets the question, *Why* did this *desertion* terminate in sin? No

No desertion conceivable could be the *cause* of sin. For had Adam been *totally* deserted, this could not have constituted him a sinner without his free choice. To make an act of desertion, however total, to influence Adam's wrong choice, rather than his own passive power, is to confound *cause* and *occasion*. By the bye, the R. understands TURRETTIN to mean, that Adam *lost* CONFIRMING grace! However accurate TURRETTIN's distinctions might be,—*potentia non peccandi* and *efficax gratia*,—and I do not dispute their accuracy, they leave the *immediate* cause of sin untouched.

I had asserted, while stating the respective causes of sin and holiness, "that the will, in the exercise of its freedom, when producing moral effects, is the instrument of the disposition; and that the character of the effect bears an infallible and exact proportion to that of the pre-disposing cause." (EDW. vol. i. p. 400.) The connection shews my meaning to be, that a disposition under *more or less* benevolent influence, in the exercise of free volition, produces *more or less* holiness, in an infallible and exact proportion; and that the disposition which is *more or less* under the influence of passive power, is *more or less* the cause of sin, in a similar proportion. Here are two *causes*, and also two *effects*, of different *characters*, exactly corresponding and proportionate. Benevolent influence cannot be the cause of sin, nor can passive power be the cause of holiness, in any measure; but the contrary is true in the exactest degree. What then can more plainly express the sentiment than the words I have employed, "that the character of the effect," as either sin or holiness, "bears an infallible and exact proportion to that of the pre-disposing cause," as either benevolent influence in the disposition, or passive power? But who, possessing candour and discernment, would infer thence, that my statement implies a *similarity* of *moral* character between *sin* and the *cause* of sin? May there not be an *exact*

proportion

proportion between *sin* and its *cause*, without that cause being *sinful*? Or, who would ingraft on my words the absurd sentiment, that, because the *character of* the *effect* is moral evil, and because there is an infallible *and* exact *proportion* between the character of an effect and *its* cause, therefore the character of the *cause* of moral evil, is *moral evil!*—I had also asserted, that "a *suspension* of sovereign, holy influence, towards a moral agent, is to deal with him in *mere equity*; (DOD. vol. v. p. 210.) and, in another connection, (PRED. p. 46.) "that then alone can moral agents fall into sin, when dealt with in *pure equity*." Here the R. fancies a contradiction between my assertions and Mr. GILBERT'S statement of them; but it is nothing more than fancy. For any one who chooses may see that "mere equity" and "pure equity," are in their respective connections, very different ideas. The former expresses the supposed *absence* of sovereign benevolence towards a moral agent; the latter, the comparative *influence* of equity and sovereignty when combined. They therefore are a direct answer to these very different questions: What *may* we call that perfection of the divine nature which is exercised towards a moral agent, when sovereign benevolence is supposed to be *absent*? *Mere equity.* When equity and sovereignty are exercised, in any supposed proportion, towards a moral agent, and he falls into sin by his abuse of liberty, which of them is concerned in the affair, equity alone, sovereignty alone, or both combined? *Pure equity—only equity.* If needful, it would be easy to illustrate my meaning from objects in nature. Were I speaking of the *quantity* of matter, to the *exclusion* of magnitude, the subject of the definition would be "*mere* quantity of matter." But were I to speak of the quantity of matter and of magnitude in a combined form, and which of the two had an influence on gravitation, I might say, "quantity of matter *only*." Again; were I speaking of *vital air*, to the exclusion of all other air, the

the subject of my definition would be "*mere* vital air." But were the enquiry respecting different airs combined, and which of them respectively had an influence in promoting combustion; the answer might be, vital air *only*; or, it was *purely* vital air.

How any one could suspect, from my sermon on Predestination, or from any thing I have written, that I did not acknowledge the divine *purpose* to comprehend all *events*, is to me a mystery; except *sin*, or the *sinfulness* of acts be included in the term "events." But the idea of God *purposing* the *sinfulness*, the obliquity, the moral pravity of the act, is what my soul abhors, as the first born of heresies; as what, in its just consequences, is demonstrably subversive of all religion and morality. The R. speaking of human volitions, asserts, "if they are foreknown, they must be included in the divine purpose." But though all human volitions are included in the divine purpose, the mere fact of their being *foreknown* is no sufficient proof of it; for the *sinfulness* of an act is foreknown; is it therefore *purposed*? He adds, "every thing which has a beginning is an effect of a pre-existing cause—and effects must flow from the divine will foreordaining them." Does the *sinfulness* of human volitions, then, "flow from the divine will?" But there is another exception. Passive power has a beginning no less than the sinfulness of actions; but does it flow from the *divine will*? Prior to created existence it could have no place; nor could a creature exist without it. Therefore it does not follow, that what does not flow from the First Cause "must be necessary and eternal." Nor is it true, that "there is no *necessity* without divine *foreordination*." He who does not comprehend the falsity of that assumed idea, does not comprehend the true origin of evil. To maintain "the divine precourse or premotion of human actions, and the foreordination of them" as actions, is one thing; but to maintain the *foreordination* of the *moral evil* of those actions, is another.

ther. The former I believe, with all consistent Calvinists: the latter I deny, as an error equally unphilosophical, unscriptural, and impious. But he who rejects *the origin of moral evil* as before stated, cannot hold this distinction without virtually contradicting himself. I had said, that "the moral evil which attaches to any act is equitably *permitted*." From this the R. infers that it was *purposed*. But the inference is not just; for *permission* cannot imply *purpose*, except on the false assumption that passive power is *not* the true cause of the *perversion* of a free act. Allow this cause, and to *purpose* the *permission* of sin appears at once a contradictory idea, adopted for the sake of avoiding a more obvious absurdity, that is, a direct, voluntary, and eternal necessitation of moral evil. But the idea is a mere subterfuge, for want of an open and fair solution of this infinitely interesting and tremendous phenomenon.—I remain, Sir, your's, &c.

E. WILLIAMS.

Rotherham, June 14, 1808.

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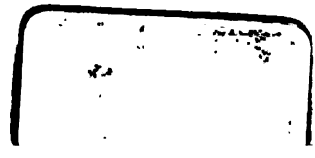
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